

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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LOU AND ELLEN MCGINLEY CHAIR TO SUPPORT PSYCHIATRY RESEARCH

DALLAS — November 10, 1994 — Lou Ellen O'Kennon of Dallas and Harper has established the Lou and Ellen McGinley Chair in Psychiatric Research at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas in honor of her parents. The chair is endowed by a \$450,000 bequest from her mother, Ellen Adelle McGinley, combined with a \$50,000 gift from O'Kennon which has been used to fund a lectureship in psychiatry at UT Southwestern since 1985.

It is the second time O'Kennon has honored her mother and her father — inventor of the drive-in restaurant tray — through gifts to UT Southwestern's Department of Psychiatry. When she endowed the Lou and Ellen McGinley Lectureship in Psychiatric Research in 1985, her mother, Mrs. McGinley, pledged to add to her daughter's gift. Mrs. McGinley's bequest upgrades the lectureship to the newly established Lou and Ellen McGinley Chair in Psychiatric Research.

Lou McGinley developed, manufactured and marketed the Trayco drive-in restaurant tray and successfully marketed the concept of curbside food service throughout the country.

"I thought that helping research and education in psychiatry was a fitting way to recognize my parents and to express my support in this area," O'Kennon said.

Her father, who died of a brain hemorrhage, was ill for several years

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prior to his death, and her mother was treated for depression in the early 1950s.

"Mother was lucky to have an excellent physician, the late Dr. Morris Horn of Dallas, whose correct diagnosis and treatment probably saved her years of mental pain. Because of my mother and father's experiences with illnesses connected with the brain, I learned firsthand how neurological and mental-health problems can affect people's lives," she said.

Dr. Kenneth Altshuler, chairman of psychiatry, praised O'Kennon's interest in psychiatry and the financial backing she has provided his department for a number of years.

"Lou Ellen has a keen insight into the needs of psychiatric research and education. Her past support has enabled us to upgrade our continuing professional education, and the new chair will enable us to expand our efforts in this area as well as in psychiatric research," Altshuler said.

O'Kennon said her father began marketing the curb-side food-service concept throughout the United States in 1925. In the early days of her father's Trayco business, the only St. Louis businesses buying the trays were a few drug stores with soda fountains. It was ironic, O'Kennon said, that the drive-in restaurant concept spread all around the country, except in St. Louis.

In the 1930s, her father opened the Parkmoor Restaurant in St. Louis as a demonstration of curb service at a full-service restaurant.

"Dad decided to show the 'Show Me' state, as Missouri is still called,

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and opened his own restaurant with drive-in service in St. Louis," she said.

The Parkmoor, which was the first in a chain of family restaurants in Missouri, Indiana and Illinois, was a success. The Parkmoor still is owned and operated by O'Kennon, who spends several months a year in St. Louis.

After patenting the tray, McGinley founded the Tray Service Co. in Dallas, which is still in operation, to manufacture them. He then expanded to manufacture a line of stainless-steel pots and pans and stainless-steel dishes for schools, hospitals and other institutions under a second company called American Permanentware. McGinley sold the two companies in 1970.

O'Kennon said her life changed after her father's death. As an only child, she was left to manage the family business and ranching interests. She turned the McGinley Ranch, which her parents used mostly for deer hunting and vacationing, into a large working ranch.

"There is no oil on the ranch," she said jokingly, "so I have to work really hard just to break even."

Today the McGinley Ranch near Harper raises Hereford and Brahman cattle and Spanish and Angora goats. During deer season, she leases land for hunting. For ranch work O'Kennon rides quarter horses with an English dressage saddle. She enjoys touring Europe on horseback with parties of other riders and recently began taking friends on 40-mile bicycle rides in the countryside near her Hill Country ranch.

"She's an adventurous, energetic optimist," Altshuler said.

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