

An Unexpected Legacy

In 1962, when J. Leo Dowd and his wife, Catherine, moved to the Berkshires in western Massachusetts, the Jesuits were a vibrant presence in the area. “Shadowbrook,” our Jesuit novitiate and juniorate, was home to 140 Jesuits: 115 seminarians studying Ignatian spirituality and the classics over a four-year program, with 25 fathers and brothers serving on the faculty and house staff. Just a few miles away, located on the sprawling Cranwell Estate, was Cranwell Preparatory School, a Jesuit boarding school for over 200 boys and 20 Jesuit faculty members. Imagine 160 Jesuits in the 21 square miles of the town of Lenox, Massachusetts!

Were the Dowds friendly with any of the Jesuits in Lenox? We don’t know, but Leo and Catherine certainly would have come across the Jesuits in town, perhaps in their parish where the Jesuits would help, or when the scholastics took long walks in the area.

J. Leo Dowd was born in Utica, New York, in 1901. He was affiliated with the International Silver Co. of Connecticut. Later, he became vice president of the Shanango China Corp. in Pennsylvania. In 1960 he became owner-manager of the radio station WSBS-AM in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, retiring in 1972.

Catherine Mellon Dowd was born in Utica, and after graduating from Oneonta Normal School, she taught elementary school in the Utica school system.



The Dowds were married in 1929, and in 1962 moved from Connecticut to Great Barrington, where Leo died in February 1985. The Dowmel Foundation was formed after Catherine’s death in 1995, and the foundation funded an annual lecture series as an expression of the Dowds’ gratitude for the years they enjoyed living in the Berkshires.

According to Catherine’s final wishes, the Dowmel Foundation was liquidated after 15 years and its assets divided, as provided by her will. In February 2010, the Society of Jesus of New England was the grateful recipient of a substantial gift from her estate, all due to the silent and unknown effect of the Jesuits on the Dowds.



Some of the ways you may consider supporting us include:

Bequests/Wills. Donors can honor and thank those Jesuits who have made a difference in their lives by remembering the Province in their wills.

Charitable Gift Annuities. A charitable gift annuity provides the donor with a dependable income for life, while also earmarking a future gift for the Jesuits.

Insurance. Donors can designate the New England Province as a beneficiary of life insurance policies, IRAs and other assets.

Charitable Remainder Trusts. A trust can be established to ensure the donor’s financial security while providing for the future needs of the Province.



For more information visit: www.sjnen.org/PlannedGiving