

A Biography of Mary Komarnicki Yankelovich



Mary Komarnicki graduated magna cum laude from St. Bonaventure University in 1980. Majoring in psychology, Mary presented her undergraduate research at the Eastern Psychological Association, accumulated a departmental grade point average of 3.81, and received the Father Sullivan award.

Beyond the classroom, Mary was deeply affected by the University's Franciscans; her sustained involvement in Campus Ministry and Social Action programs nourished her commitment to community. Intelligent, warm-hearted and purposeful, she profoundly affected the individuals she befriended and programs she devoted herself to.

Mary pursued graduate studies at the University of California at Irvine and was awarded a master of science in social ecology. She then went to work for the Public Agenda Foundation where she was engaged in marketing research projects relating to public policy. Her caring and compassionate disposition aligned with her intellectual fascination and talent for problem-solving resulted in her developing professional expertise in public policy analysis.

In the fall of 1992, Mary married Daniel Yankelovich. Their mutual love, respect and support bonded them joyously throughout the personal and professional dimensions of their lives. In 1995, Mary died tragically in an automobile accident at age 35.

To those close to her, there was no better friend. And, to Mary, outside of family and faith, nothing was closer to her heart than St. Bonaventure University — for it was there that her grace and charm matured, her intellectual competencies developed, and her spirituality began to flourish.

The Mary Yankelovich Fellowship at St. Bonaventure

Since 1997, thanks to the generosity of Mary's husband, Daniel, St. Bonaventure University has proudly presented the Mary Yankelovich Memorial Prize to students who demonstrate the blend of qualities and achievements that characterized Mary.

In May of 2002, the University replaced the Mary Yankelovich Memorial Prize with the Mary Yankelovich Fellowship Program, a program with the mission of not only recognizing exceptional talent and character, but also promoting and developing it.

During St. Bonaventure's Spring 1998 graduation ceremony, Daniel Yankelovich gave the commencement address, titled "Caring About Each Other". Of Mary, he said, "She valued the formal part of her education, but more than the formal part, what she valued most was the community, this place where people care about each other."

Daniel Yankelovich is co-founder of Public Agenda, a non-partisan public research organization and is Chair of Viewpoint Learning, an organization that develops specialized dialogues for business and public policy.