

A Conversation with Michelle and Bill Pohlad

Honorary Campaign Co-chairs

‘The Basilica is a local and national treasure’

BY JOHAN VAN PARYS, PHD

As a young boy in the 1960s, Bill Pohlad remembers seeing The Basilica for the first time on a snowy winter night. His father, Carl, took him along on a visit with then-rector Bishop Cowley. Michelle Pohlad’s first experience with The Basilica was also on a snowy night in the 1980s. She was walking from downtown to her apartment in Uptown and passed by The Basilica. Big, fluffy snowflakes falling from the sky were illuminated by the light emanating from The Basilica. Maybe simply to warm up or drawn in by a higher power, she entered The Basilica for the first time and was amazed by the beauty she saw and the peace she felt.

After Bill and Michelle began dating, they started attending Mass at The Basilica. Michelle, though baptized Catholic, had been raised Lutheran. It was at The Basilica that she went through adult formation with Fr. Dale Korogi, then associate pastor, and was confirmed into the Catholic Church. Bill and Michelle got married at The Basilica in 1994. Their son Oliver, who is now an adult, was baptized, received First Communion, and was confirmed at The Basilica.

Over the years they have come to truly believe in the mission of The Basilica. As Michelle said: “We have watched The Basilica navigate difficult waters with faith and love providing hope and offering light

not only to parishioners but to the broader Twin Cities community and beyond. And we trust The Basilica will continue to do the same into the future.”

“It is precisely because we believe in The Basilica’s mission and leadership that we are happy to be part of the current capital campaign both as contributors and as honorary co-chairs,” according to Bill.

Part of their donation to the capital campaign has been designated as a matching gift because, “we would like everyone to join the campaign and honor everyone’s contribution by making it go even further,” said Michelle. “The Basilica is a local and national treasure that is a beacon of hope, light, and love which touches everyone who enters — and it radiates far beyond the building.”

Johan M.J. van Parys, Ph.D., is the Managing Director of Ministries and has been the Director of Liturgy and the Sacred Arts at The Basilica since 1995. ✚



On behalf of The Basilica, we thank the Pohlad family for their continued dedication and support of our landmark church and the wider community.

Learn more about the \$1 million challenge grant, made possible through the generosity of Bill and Michelle Pohlad, at restoreourbasilica.org.
