

When Trudy Laramée first moved to the U.S. from Germany at age 22 and settled in the Springfield area, she always felt a connection to Elms.

"I really wanted to work here," she said. She attributes the feeling to the fact that she was raised in an orphanage in Germany by Franciscan nuns. "Sisters are always there for their communities. And I don't care where you're at, if you're in Europe or the United States, they all have the same calling," Trudy said.

She made her goal of working at Elms College a reality 13 years ago, first getting a job in the accounts payable department. That was followed by a brief stint as an administrator in the president's office, then, in 2008, she moved to her present position in the dean of students' office. Her feelings of connection have only deepened there as she developed relationships with students.

"This is the best job I've ever had — that's how much I enjoy it," she said. Watching them develop into poised young adults over their college careers can be emotional. "They accomplish so much in those four years," she said. "So when I see them walking at graduation or when I line them up — I'm better now, but the first couple of years, I was just bawling my eyes out."

She was already a yearly donor to the college, but Trudy decided she wanted to leave something to Elms in her will that will continue to help students. So, in 2011, she joined the Living Legacy Society.

"When we leave this Earth, it's important to leave something meaningful behind," Trudy said. "It's important that you were here, that you made a difference. Especially if you don't have children, it's something to be remembered by."

She hopes her gift to the college gives students a needed boost at an opportune time.

"When I came to the States and I didn't know anybody, I met all these great people, and they kind of saw me through it over the years," Trudy said. "Everybody needs that."

"There's so many people that could use a little something. And it's just a support really, I want to give my support to wherever it's needed," she added.

She is also considering helping students more directly by establishing a scholarship.

"I'm thinking about doing that as I'm inching closer to retirement," Trudy said. "That would be my ultimate gift."

Join the Living Legacy Society

If you would like more information on joining the Living Legacy Society, contact Bernadette Nowakowski '89, '08, assistant vice president of institutional advancement, at **413-265-2214** or nowakowskib@elms.edu.

