

# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

## PIERRE P. CLAEYSSENS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Established 2004



**Pierre P. ClaeysSENS**  
1908-2003

Pierre Paul ClaeysSENS was a cherished friend and supporter of Pepperdine University. Born in Antwerp, Belgium, on December 16, 1908, Pierre and his family were saved from starvation during World War I by the Hoover Relief Program, which resulted in Mr. ClaeysSENS' lifelong admiration for the United States and the armed forces.

During the 1920s, Pierre served as a corporal in the Belgian infantry. Fleeing the depression in Europe, Pierre immigrated to Chicago in 1938, where he lived with his sister, Henriette Baumann. In 1941, Pierre moved to Santa Monica, California, and began apprenticing with Los Angeles architects. Pierre received his U.S. citizenship in 1943. During World War II, since he was too old to serve in the military, Pierre worked with the engineering department of the CalShip yard in Long Beach. In 1946, Pierre married Fay Byatt and in 1950 he earned his California State architects license.

In 1953, Pierre's wife developed polio and remained disabled until her death in 1963. During this period of his life, Pierre cared for his wife and their two children, and continued working as an architect. After Fay's death, Pierre and his children moved to Lompoc, California.

He remarried in 1967, although his wife was tragically killed in a car accident less than a year later, and Pierre himself was critically injured. Pierre, whose optimism and philanthropy would become legendary, designed a number of civic buildings, including a total of 18 schools for the Santa Monica Unified School District and the Lompoc Unified School District. Through hard times and good times, Pierre held fast to the belief in a strong family, moral values, and education.

In 1973, Pierre retired, married Ailene Wood, and moved to nearby Santa Barbara. The active Pierre, who loved to dance and walked two miles every day, was wellknown throughout local communities for his generosity to charities. Pierre had a great sense of humor, abundant compassion, and loved to laugh.

In 1980 Pierre and Ailene established the Wood-ClaeysSENS Foundation, which gives grants to charitable and nonprofit organizations in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. Every year, Pierre personally sponsored an annual ball in Santa Barbara that honored members of the military, both past and present, to thank them and recognize their service to the American people. Along with the Military Honor Garden he established at Pepperdine, Pierre dedicated a Veteran's Walkway in Ellings Park and helped fund the Pierre ClaeysSENS Military Museum and Library, both in Santa Barbara. The computer lab in the Center for Communication and Business and a conference room at the Villa Graziadio Executive Center are named in Pierre's honor.

Pierre passed away in 2003, survived by his son, Paul ClaeysSENS; his daughter Noelle ClaeysSENS Burkey; and five grandchildren. He is remembered for his optimism, philanthropy, love of America, infinite generosity, and a genuinely warm sense of humor. Pierre exemplified the Pepperdine University mission, leading a life of purpose, service, and leadership.



### SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

*The Pierre P. ClaeysSENS Endowed Scholarship is given annually to a Seaver College student in good standing in all areas of the University.*