As long as her family can remember, Mary and her father, George Mathaus, longtime residents of the Chicago area, loved Notre Dame. Mary’s mother died when she was very young, and her father raised her alone. They regularly came to Notre Dame to attend football games together.

Mary taught elementary school for more than 30 years in the Chicago suburbs, and her special areas of interest were reading and English. Upon her death, she left almost her entire estate to charity, including a residuary bequest to Notre Dame. As a memorial to her, the University has established the Mary B. Mathaus Endowed Library Collection on the Book and English Literature and the Mary Barbara Mathaus Graduate Fellowship, which supports a graduate student in the Department of English.

The Mathaus Endowment is directed to an aspect of English literature that has grown dramatically at Notre Dame in recent years: the history of the book. Enabling the acquisition of materials that illuminate English literature as it relates to the book as a physical object, this endowment supports the development of collections depicting the many ways and forms in which literary texts have been produced and reproduced over centuries, including any aspect of “book-arts” as they relate to English or American literary texts.

Because of the Mathaus Endowment, the Hesburgh Libraries have acquired a CD-ROM of Beowulf and books on illustrators of English literature, literary publishing at the Bodley Head, Will Bradley’s graphic arts, and subscriptions lists of the 18th century.