

Joe Aguzzi, Sr. – Gladys Castle “Friend of Delta State” Service Award

Even though Joe Aguzzi Sr. was unable to attend Delta State, he has been a staunch supporter of the university since returning home to Cleveland after World War II. The Purple Heart veteran has ushered more than 20 immediate family members, their spouses and children through Delta State. Even Margaret, his wife of nearly 64 years (Nov. 24), studied art at Delta State in her late sixties. The fruit of that labor of love adorns the walls of the family home.

Aguzzi’s parents immigrated to the United States in 1895, initially settling alongside other Italian families in Lake Village, Arkansas. In 1907, the farming family relocated to more fertile grounds in Bolivar County, sixteen years before Delta State was established. As youngsters, the Delta State campus was a grand playground for the Aguzzi brothers, Joe and Victor. Even though they longed to attend college after graduating from Cleveland High School, the family didn’t have the funds. After military service, Aguzzi returned to farm his family’s land. As president of Aguzzi Farms in Cleveland, he was a well-respected and prolific rice producer. There, the Aguzzis raised a family that now consists of seven grown children, 15 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

Extremely active in the community, Aguzzi has been integrally involved with the Farm Bureau, Rice Council, Knights of Columbus, and Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church. He has served on the Board of Directors for the Bolivar Medical Center Foundation, Cleveland/Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce, Delta Council, and the Delta State University Foundation. He is a Delta State Veteran’s Atrium supporter, and along with Victor, who died last February, endowed a substantial Delta State scholarship in honor of the Aguzzi family’s longstanding relationship with the university.

***Presented to recognize outstanding service and contributions to Delta State University by a non-alumnus.**