

9-1-2020

Alumnus Profile: A Life of Activism

Follow this and additional works at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/reimaginings>



Part of the [Adult and Continuing Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(2020) "Alumnus Profile: A Life of Activism," *Reimaginings*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 9 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/reimaginings/vol1/iss9/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Alumni Publications at Via Sapientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reimaginings by an authorized editor of Via Sapientiae. For more information, please contact digitalservices@depaul.edu.

A Life of Activism

SCPS alumnus James Mumm continues the family tradition



James Mumm (SCPS '02) with his mother, Maureen Dolan, a past adjunct DePaul faculty member. Dolan was posthumously given DePaul's highest honor, the Via Sapientiae Award.

Protests, marches, handing out leaflets. For James Mumm (SCPS '02), such was the stuff of childhood.

"I remember my first protest. I was in a stroller and we were demanding that [a university child center scheduled to close] reopen so that women [students] could have child care while they went to class," he says.

This steady diet of social justice activism is thanks to his mom, Maureen Dolan, who was a powerful influence on him and his younger brother, Jesse. "We were the kids who would be handing out the newspapers at demonstrations. It wasn't like being indoctrinated, it was enculturation. It was just the way we grew up," says Mumm.

Dolan, who passed away in March, went on to earn her doctorate. She helped found the Logan Square Cooperative in 2001. She taught at DePaul for more than 20 years as an adjunct faculty member in SCPS and in the Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies program. She was also an adjunct chaplain in the Division of Mission and Ministry.

James's brother, Jesse Mumm, is a lecturer in Latin American and Latino Studies, Critical Ethnic Studies at DePaul. Both brothers were members of Stone Soup Cooperative in Chicago. "The theme of Stone Soup, and really of my life, is joy and justice," says Mumm.

Finding his way to DePaul

Mumm grew up in New York and Chicago. After completing a year of college in New York, he moved back to Chicago and

in 1990, at the age of 19, began working full-time at People's Action, an organization that seeks to advance a long-term agenda of social, racial, economic and gender justice. He spent the next 29 years working in some capacity for People's Action, eventually managing a staff of 65.

The work was empowering.

"I loved my work. We were helping everyday people build power to solve problems in their own lives. It was the essence of people power organizing," he says.

While being an organizer does not require a college degree, Mumm decided that he needed to go back to school to learn and explore beyond his work.

DePaul stood out for him.

"The School for New Learning [now SCPS] was really attractive to me because I was older than 25 and I appreciated the competence-based education, including Advanced Project courses and [applying] some of my life experience as a community organizer. The model was just right for me," he says.

After completing his degree, Mumm moved to New York, and in 2019, he became campaigns director for Greenpeace USA.

"I would not be working for social change if not for my mother," he says. "My lifelong commitment to justice, equality, cooperation and peace are values she modeled for us at home and in her political work and teaching."

A memorial tribute to Maureen Dolan (1949-2020) appears in the Summer 2020 issue of [Yoga Chicago](#).