

## **Ludy and Colby: A Lifelong Love Story**

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*When Ludy died, his funeral was in the chapel at Colby College. The chapel was packed, and what brought spirit to your soul and tears to your eyes was when the entire football team solemnly walked in to respectfully take their seats and paid tribute to the man old enough to be their great grandfather but ageless enough to be their buddy. — Levine Family of Waterville, "Ludy Levine Scrapbook"*

Lewis "Ludy" Levine, the "ageless wonder boy of Waterville," along with his "sport maniac" younger brother Percy "Pacy" Levine, were the charming examples and the linchpin of a Jewish family with deep local roots. Both of the brothers went to Colby in the 1920s and, as far as people remembered, "They loved it!" According to Sara Arnon, Ludy's niece who spent her childhood with her beloved uncles Ludy and Pacy in the Levine's big house. Ludy had a great time at Colby and was an active member in the fraternity ATO even though Colby fraternities had already begun to blackball Jewish students. Ludy's nephew Bill Alford recalled, "he volunteered over the years to be associated with his fraternity in the sense that he might be a Big Brother or whatever the terminology was called at that time." Ludy apparently loved to be this Big Brother. He carried on this love and care about Colby's students and made it a lifelong career.

Ludy, in his nearly 100 years of life filled with love and care, never married. Sara explained, "Ludy told us: 'I'm not going to get married...I'm going to put all of my eggs in two baskets: family and Colby.'" As he entered his second half of life, Ludy decided that he was

going to devote his passion to his extended family and his beloved college—Colby. This gentleman's deep love to Colby expressed itself in multiple ways. According to Sara, Ludy would write to families and keep in contact with various high school coaches to encourage them to send their athletes to Colby. "He loved doing it. It wasn't a chore for him. He loved it!"

Ludy was also keen on funding students to go to Colby. He and his brother Pacy started the "Ludy and Pacy Scholarship Fund" to support students who couldn't afford Colby's tuition fees. Sara shared a story about how a local woman thought Ludy and Pacy paid for her son's tuition fee at Colby. "That lady... told us that, she doesn't know about where or who paid for it, but her son went to Colby. And she never paid for it. So she guessed it was probably Ludy and Pacy." It was not hard or frivolous to draw this conclusion, since the Levine brothers helped many kids to go to Colby without saying a word. As Sara recalled, Ludy and Pacy also had great faith in the Colby students they supported.

You could count on them. They sent many kids to Colby without making any fanfare about it—they just paid for them to go. They had a lot of students who were on what we called the Levine's Scholarship... I know that there was kids that graduated from Colby who still owned them money. But they never worried about when they were going to get paid. They knew that they would someday.

Having a great time at Colby as a student and an alumnus himself, Ludy believed that everyone deserved Colby's excellent education and Colby deserved the best students of all.

Another big aspect of Ludy's love towards Colby was sports. Meg Bernier '81, the director of Colby's alumni office who also was a member of sports team in her college times, told us that the Levine brothers would show up at every game, screaming and running. Sara also shared her memories about the "biggest Colby sport fans'" distinctive activities by the sideline.

He [Ludy] really loved to talk with people. So he would be at the game watching but talking with people, finding out all about your history and he would never forget it... And he would remember those kinds of details about you. Pacy would not even remember your name, because Pacy was only interesting in the game. Pacy couldn't sit in the seat. Pacy was running the field with the football team, yelling and screaming at them... I think that people who knew Ludy and Pacy would say, Ludy was in the bleachers, watching the game and talking to people around him; Pacy was running the field, screaming and you thought he was gonna have a heart attack.

Charlie Miller ('69), who lived in Waterville after graduating, described Ludy and Pacy as the "penultimate Colby supporters. They probably cared more about Colby football than the guys on the football team!" Ludy also funded Colby's sports in various ways. He bought Colby its new baseball scoreboard and its new football scoreboard, as well as contributing extensively to Colby's new track. Ludy's excitement and love for sports was not hard to understand—he was surrounded by the students of his beloved school and he got to know them well by chatting. Not to mention the fact that almost every Colby sports booster was deeply fond of this elder boy and treated him with the appreciation and respect that he deserved.

Ludy was quite involved with alumni activities as well. Ludy was honored at the 1969 homecoming dinner for his dedication to Colby and enjoyed hosting Colby sports boosters' dinners after they won a game. Last but not least, he tried with all his efforts to attract prospective students to Colby. As Sara recalled,

If you were bringing your child to Maine to look at summer camps and your child was 10 years old, he would tell you: "And don't forget to go to Colby! Don't forget to go look at Colby, because you are going to want to send your son there!"... He loved

the school. He thought that there was no place better!

Ludy always wanted prospective students to choose, experience, and enjoy Colby, because to him, Colby was the best place ever. Due to Ludy's genuine love to Colby, Sara, who grew up down the street from campus and wanted to experience a large city, was afraid to tell Ludy that she was not applying to Colby.

I was so scared that I was going to hurt them. I was actually thinking that at least I should apply, and then I can say that I decided that I want to go to Simmons. It was so ingrained in me of how important Colby was in their lives, especially Ludy's life. So you kind of have this respect for them. And it was kind of the most disrespectful thing I could think of doing at age 18 was to say, "I don't want to go to Colby." And I had to say it to them... I remember shaking, literally, you know when you read a book that says "my knees were shaking," that was exactly how I felt then, I almost vomited thinking about telling this to them. It was so traumatic to me.

Sara's fear and anxiety can be easily comprehended. She had great respect to her uncle Ludy, and Ludy's sincere emotions toward Colby were so deep that she thought she was going to break his heart by saying so.

Ludy reached out to Colby's students fervently as a store owner, too. Levine's store served students with a specially created "Colby Corner" and would always offer benches for students who would drop by and chat. Later on, Ludy became famous for helping young Colby graduates by allowing them to borrow suits on credit without interest at the start of their careers and pay when the students earned enough money. Judy Brody, a Levine family member who worked at Colby for over 30 years, shared a story that she recalled:

If a young man of good standing didn't have enough money to buy a suit jacket and

he was going for an interview and someone told Ludy and Pacy about him, they would give him clothing to go. And I know several people who have come back over the years to see them before they died just to pay them back for the jacket, many times over, to tell them that to have someone reach out for you like that was a phenomenal thing.

Ludy was reaching out for them because he couldn't bear to see a good Colby graduate end up with no job. He would provide the launching opportunity if he had a chance.

According to Judy, "Ludy was so loyal to Colby that it was almost the epic. I couldn't think of anyone who can surpass him." This relationship was not a one-way dedication, but rather a reciprocal rapport. Colby responded warmly and respectably to Ludy's deep commitment. The school would assign students to accompany Ludy and Pacy while they were roaming and rushing by the sideline simply to make sure they wouldn't get hurt. On February 8, 1981, Colby threw a fabulous 80th Birthday Party for Ludy to celebrate the moment of this "ageless wonder boy of Waterville" passing his 80 années of warmth, friendliness, and dedication and to mark his sincere love to Colby. Sara recalled her uncle's excitement about this tremendous party,

My uncle was thrilled for days and weeks that they were giving it to him. They promised to give him one when he turned 100. As he was aging and getting older, he would ask: "Am I 100 yet?" He literally died within six months before his 100th birthday. I mean it was sad for him, because he was almost there.

Yes, Ludy was almost there. He loved the party that involved all his friends and family and, most importantly, Colby. While he was waiting for the big 100th birthday party, he was waiting to spend some enjoyable time with those people he loved and cared about. Colby obviously cared about and loved him, too. The school spent much effort not only to prepare his birthday party,

but also to invite him and his brother to various school events and to preserve detailed materials about Ludy and Pacy, including some donated by the Levine family, which is how we get to know these two remarkable gentlemen now.

As one of Colby's most loyal sons, Ludy maintained this beautiful relationship with Colby until God took him away. It's hard to forget that there once was such a lovely and warm man who cared about Colby's students; a man who decided not to get married in order to serve his beloved school; a man who hated to see Colby losing any sports game; a man who paid the fees for students who couldn't afford Colby's excellent tuition; a man who reached out to anyone who needed help; and a man who helped the school and the students without asking anything in return. It was no surprise that the sports team boys marched in his funeral. Colby was Ludy's family as well, and family is all about love and support, which Ludy embraced the whole time in his lifelong love story with Colby.

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