Barbara says that from her first visit, she felt that our son (Francis) at the time. In 1960, after stops in Israel and Germany, the couple found their way to New York City’s Institute for Muscle Disease. When it... of fundamental discoveries, published many papers and book chapters, and were beloved by their students and colleagues. Still, nothing gave Michael and Kate greater pride than their sons (both “in the family business” as professors) and their four grandchildren. George... of Minnesota’s Department of Chemistry. Francis works in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York.

On the UIC campus, the Báránys were known as “the professors who hold hands.”

Michael and Kate were born in Hungary. He, the son of a Jewish farmer. She, the daughter of a Jewish physician. During the war, Michael survived Auschwitz. Most close relatives did not. Both returned to Hungary after the war to continue their educations. Michael pursued his M.D. and a Ph.D. in Biochemistry. Kate, a Ph.D. in Physics.

The two met by chance in June 1949, after Kate had cut her finger slicing bread and Michael gave her first aid. They met again on August 1 at a student retreat, where a four-day courtship led to marriage on October 20, 1949. For the next six decades, Michael and Kate celebrated anniversaries of both August 1-4 (“high holidays”) and what they called their “legal” marriage.

In 1956, the Báránys took part in a student march that sparked the Hungarian Revolution (soon crushed by the Soviets). Early in 1957, they fled Hungary by walking 10 miles through the snow-covered border with their toddler son, George. Kate was pregnant with their second son (Francis) at the time. In 1960, after stops in Israel and Germany, the couple found their way to New York City’s Institute for Muscle Disease. When it closed in 1974, Michael and Kate found a new home at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) College of Medicine. They continued their research, made a number of fundamental discoveries, published many papers and book chapters, and were beloved by their students and colleagues.

Still, nothing gave Michael and Kate greater pride than their sons (both “in the family business” as professors) and their four grandchildren. George works in the University of Minnesota’s Department of Chemistry. Francis works in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York.

Have you or anyone in your family ever had an MRI? Had it not been for Michael Bárány’s pioneering research, exploratory surgery may have been needed to find out what was going on inside you or your loved one.

That was just one chapter in the story of Michael Bárány, his wife of nearly 62 years, is every bit as remarkable. The story of Kate Bárány, his wife of nearly 62 years, is every bit as remarkable.

When I was young and rich with time to spend on things eternal, tomorrow and in just a little while seemed to me forever. Now I grow old and days are dear, tomorrow and forever seem just a little while at last.

Both Michael and Kate continued to live in their apartment near the UIC campus, and they maintained offices at the school. In recent years, Kate had developed health problems and Michael was overseeing her care. But in February 2011, he fell and broke a hip. All of a sudden, big changes had to be made.

Kate was alone in the apartment and needed a 24/7 live-in caregiver. And after his discharge from the hospital, Michael started a difficult rehabilitation. The consensus was that he would never be able to return home.

The family decided that it would be best to move both Michael and Kate to the Twin Cities to be closer to son George and his wife Barbara. In April 2011, Barbara took a leave of absence from teaching at Highland Park Senior High in order to explore their options. The initial plan was to find a transitional care facility where Michael could complete his rehab and a condo where Kate could live with support from home health aides. The family also needed to plan for Michael’s eventual move into Assisted Living.

On June 5, a week before Kate was scheduled to move into her condo, she suffered a stroke in Chicago. It left her paralyzed and unable to eat. Admissions Director Deb Veit felt it was important for Michael to be with Kate in her final days, so she offered the family a room for Kate that was close to Michael’s. “We were wondering what to do, and Deb just volunteered it,” says Barbara.

Kate arrived in the Twin Cities on June 8 and passed away on June 13 with Michael by her side. Michael continued to make excellent progress, but he succumbed to complications of his age and joined his beloved wife on July 24. His last word was, “Kati.”

A POEM

When I was young and rich with time to spend on things eternal, tomorrow and in just a little while seemed to me forever. Now I grow old and days are dear, tomorrow and forever seem just a little while at last.

Jim and Lee Palmer have lived at Cornelia House since it opened in 2005. They hail from the Grove Park neighborhood. Both were teachers (Jim was also a counselor, then principal). As we go to press, Jim is in our Transitional Care Center, and Lee just moved to Iris Park Commons for Assisted Living. “Everything we need is right here,” says Jim. “That makes it easier to roll with the punches.”