Faculty and Staff Highlights: Loretta Konecki Professor Emerita

Dottie Barnes

Grand Valley State University

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Colleagues: What brought you to Grand Valley State University and why did you stay?

Konecki: I came to Grand Valley from Denver in 1986 as the director of the School of Education. Everyone was very congenial and welcoming.

I was brought here because I facilitated successful accreditations at other institutions. My primary task was to lead our efforts to become accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). With the coordination of Al Ten Eyck and work of Judy Harpold and faculty and administrators throughout Grand Valley, we were successful in our efforts and achieved national recognition for our teacher education programs. We have continued to be nationally accredited and have our pro-
grams recognized since then. It has been a pleasure to be a part of these efforts.

My husband and I fell in love with the area and Grand Rapids. We love the cultural opportunities and environment, and being able to experience four seasons is important to us.

**Colleagues:** What have been some of the most important accomplishments you have achieved during your time at Grand Valley?

**Konecki:** In addition to NCATE Accreditation, we have strengthened and expanded our teacher education and graduate programs. We added to our offerings including the Graduate Teacher Certification (GTC), College Student Affairs Leadership (CSAL), and Educational Specialist programs to meet educational needs.

Employing outstanding faculty to teach capable university students to work with pupils from all backgrounds to be successful in school and life has been an important commitment. Our efforts have included encouraging high-needs students to become teachers, new teachers to work in high-needs schools, and teachers in high-needs schools to continually enhance their skills.

I have worked on several grants and efforts during my years here, most of which have focused on helping children and families in high-needs schools have opportunities they might not otherwise have.

**Colleagues:** What people, programs and partnerships have enriched students and the university?

**Konecki:** We have established partnerships with urban districts through federal, state and foundation grants to support our commitment to enhancing the education of all students. Some of these programs involve advancing teacher skills through teacher enhancement grants, Michigan Partnership for New Education, Urban Teacher Academy, Middle Start, and W. K. Kellogg Foundation’s Woodrow Wilson Michigan Teacher Fellowship Program.

An example of just one program that involves urban schools is a student teaching opportunity in Broward County, Florida, which I worked on with Linda McCrea. Our students become familiar with people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

There are too many people to name, but I think of Don Pottorff and Barb Reinken and their work with the Godfrey-Lee reading program, and others like Cherie Williams, Sandy Miller, Jay Cooper, Lorraine Alston, John Shinsky, Caryn King and others who facilitate overseas experiences so our students have a more global perspective. Or, Liz Storey and Sheryl Vlietstra who help provide a library of books for new teachers working in high needs schools.

College of Education faculty continually work to provide new opportunities for their students and society.

It has been a pleasure to work with teachers and administrators in schools and throughout the university in these efforts.

We have been very fortunate at Grand Valley and the College of Education to have a wide variety of people with diverse interests that we can call upon and use to both advance our opportunities and expand our thinking. We have people who challenge us to go beyond what we might ordinarily do to be responsive to the students in our classrooms.

**Colleagues:** What are your hopes and dreams for the future of the College of Education?

**Konecki:** I hope that the College of Education will continue its commitment to grow and change in ways that help all students and educators to be successful in a changing world.

I hope we continue our commitment to all students, all children, all youth and all adults. One of the important things about education is that it can provide you with opportunities you might not have without it. To continue our efforts to expand educational opportunities through new programs, technology, partnerships, research, and service of faculty are all crucial to the success of our students and our country.