6-6-2012

Introduction of Dr. Johnine L. Callahan, delivered at the GVSU Enrichment Dinner on June 6, 2012

Arend D. Lubbers
Grand Valley State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/presidential_speeches

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/presidential_speeches/288
There are some professors who come to a university because they need a job and have the qualifications to do it. They are connected more to their profession than to the institution and often seek a better paying job at another place. There are others who, over the years, blend their commitment to their professions with one to the university and its students. They ultimately determine the quality of the institution. Dr. Johnnie Callahan came in 1979, stayed, contributed, and became one of Grand Valley’s worthies, a word the British use to identify those who earn for themselves a significant place in their society.

She and her colleagues were responsible in the early years for setting higher standards in health education; standards which continue to distinguish the College of Health Sciences. But, this is an award specifically recognizing her venture into the promotion and administration of the Honors Program, now the Honors College. Grand Valley wanted to attract the best students bringing them together to pursue their academic objectives and stimulating one another, guided by a team of professors who integrated course work across disciplinary lines. Johnnie Callahan put it all together and made it successful. She began with 40 students and now she can bask in the accomplishments of over 1,000 students of the highest quality enrolled in the Frederick Meijer Honors College. She is responsible for the
concept of a Living Center where Honors students live and the faculty associated with them have their offices. It is mentoring for academic achievement, and it works. Upon hearing that she was to receive this award a former student, Shawn Galdeen, a Ph.D. in Molecular Biology, wrote, “I am certain that I am not alone in feeling the positive effects of my many encounters with her that reverberate throughout my life.”

Every university should have a Johnnie Callahan, and here at Grand Valley we have the original. If you want to know why Grand Valley excels begin by looking at Dr. Callahan’s career. Tonight we honor the person and the career.
Arend D. Lubbers Award
Dr. Johnine Callahan

Dr. Johnine Callahan started her career at Grand Valley State University in 1979 as an assistant professor of Health Sciences. Her commitment to students and strong grounding in subject matter, coupled with her experience as director of a hospital microbiology laboratory and a hospital-based medical technology school, led to her appointment as Director of the School of Health Sciences in 1983. She became an associate professor and in 1989 became a full professor.

In 1990 Dr. Callahan was asked to direct the GVSU Honors Program part-time, and she also briefly directed the Freshman Studies program in 1991. She continued to teach in Health Sciences, but the Honors Program became her principal focus.

She envisioned a program that respected and challenged the demonstrated abilities of students by integrating coursework across disciplinary lines through team teaching as well as complimentary course scheduling and sequencing. This vision also required bringing the full resources of the university into a cooperative whole, creating a living/learning environment that draws on academic and student life resources. Her dream of a community of scholars led to the development of the first Glenn A. Niemeyer Living Center in 2000. In 2008 this living/learning center moved into a new facility with its own faculty offices, classrooms and double the student residential capacity. Dr. Callahan’s concept grew from an Honors program of 40 students to become the Frederick A. Meijer Honors College, a nationally recognized and often emulated program with over 1,000 enrolled students.
2012 Enrichment Dinner

Impressions

Wednesday, June 6, 2012
DeVos Place
Steelcase Ballroom