

6-1-2010

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Mary Seeger Administrative Award Ceremony
June 2010
by Arend D. Lubbers

Here are the qualities a new college needs in those who launch it and stay with it.

1. Attraction to the challenge of doing something new.
2. Flexibility to accept new assignments.
3. Insistence on high standards of performance as the new college strives to provide high quality educations.

These were the characteristics Mary Seeger brought to the new college being built on the ravines and in the cornfields of Allendale. When I arrived five years after Mary, I learned almost immediately to ask her to guide initiatives, lead sensitive investigations, and give her opinion about difficult decisions. She was the “go to” person.

As the college matured into a university she developed along with the institution becoming the first woman to hold the title of Dean. She guided with great ability all the functions a rapidly growing university needs to support its academic program, and from her position she made sure that students met high academic standards throughout Grand Valley. She was an early standard bearer guiding the university towards the academic position it hold today. All the while she was a builder of Grand Valley; she was the major mover to see that women had equal opportunities in the university that emerged. I am grateful to her for her fairness, calmness, and insistence in the cause. With her there was fact not fiction in the delicate matters that always arise when a culture change is in progress.

She demonstrated administrative and academic skill early and sustained it throughout her career. But we cannot recognize these achievements only, and give her the award. We must note also the many and enduring personal relationships she and her professor husband, Bill, have with former students. The Seegers embody the heart and soul as well as the mind of Grand Valley. Grand Valley is now a large and complex institution, but at its core are the values and evidence of Mary Seeger’s work.