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A KEEN Award

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The Kern Entrepreneurship Education Network (KEEN) has given retired University of Dayton Innovation Center Director Phil Doepker its Wolf Pack Award for being an outstanding network member and contributor.

"As an educator, he demonstrates his caring for others through his contributions and leadership. Phil 'walks the talk' and is a role model for his students, his colleagues, and the community at large," said John F. Dacquisto, director of Gonzaga University's Center for Engineering Design.

Doepker retired from the University in December after 26 years, spending the last four as Innovation Center director. He received the award at KEEN's winter conference Jan. 6.

Robert Kern and his Kern Family Foundation created KEEN to help increase the quantity and quality of U.S. engineering talent. KEEN's mission is to graduate engineers equipped with an entrepreneurial mindset who will contribute to business success and transform the U.S. work force.

Doepker helped grow the Design and Manufacturing Clinic from 64 students and 11 projects to an Innovation Center with 330 students and 80 projects. Since 1996, University of Dayton engineering students have worked on more than 600 projects for 120 clients. Seven teams of engineering students have finished in the top five of the School of Business Administration's Business Plan Competition in the four-year history of the competition. One team has taken home the top prize.

"A dean of one of the nation's largest engineering schools mentioned at a meeting with other deans that he is trying to mimic what we are doing with our Innovation Center. That is a tribute to Phil and his work," University of Dayton School of Engineering Dean Tony Saliba said. "Phil is an extraordinary man whose dedication and contributions to the University set a sterling example for all of us. He has had a remarkable career with unparalleled contributions to the School of Engineering, the University of Dayton and the field of engineering innovation beyond our walls."

Doepker, a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, has been recognized as an outstanding educator at the school, university and national levels. He has won the University of Dayton Alumni Award of Excellence in Teaching, the Affiliate Societies Council of Dayton Outstanding Engineer and Scientist Award, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Robert Abbott Award of Service to Design Engineering Education and the Ben C. Sparks Medal for Eminent Service to the ASME International for his contributions to engineering and engineering technology education.

"No words can ever suffice to thank Phil for his contributions. Many generations of students have benefitted from his teaching, guidance and mentoring. Many generations of students will benefit from what he has built in the Innovation Center," Saliba said. "The solid foundation on which this center is built will allow the next director, departments and the School of Engineering to make this very special place even more special."

Saliba and the School of Engineering honored Doepker with the establishment of the Phil Doepker Scholarship in Engineering Innovation to be given to a first-year student.

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