

2-12-2009

Family Spirit

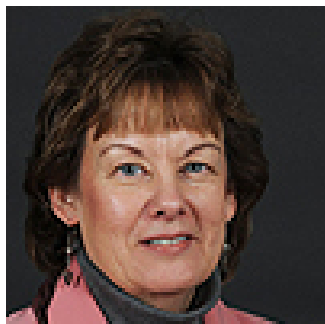
Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls

Recommended Citation

"Family Spirit" (2009). *News Releases*. 1575.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/1575

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marketing and Communications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlangen1@udayton.edu.

University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



Family Spirit

02.12.2009 | Education, Catholic

Susan Ferguson, director of the Center for Catholic Education, sometimes apologizes for her effusiveness when sharing her affection for the University of Dayton and the Society of Mary.

"I can't help it," said Ferguson, who came to UD as a student in 1972, graduated in 1975 and joined the teacher education faculty in 1990. "UD and the Marianists made me who I am. They helped me become what I was meant to be. I am so, so grateful for that."

Ferguson has made it her mission to do the same for the legions of students she has helped usher into education professions.

"To receive this award — I'm not sure there could be a higher honor," Ferguson said. "The place that helped me grow up as a person and a professor is honoring me for understanding its mission. That is so touching, so humbling."

That humility, plus deep faith, prudence and a gift for hospitality, are Ferguson's trademarks, said Maura Donahue, a member of the Rector's Council and a fellow Marianist Educational Associate.

"If you think about the Lackner Award as set aside for people who emulate Mary, that's what she does," said Donahue, director of UD's Program for Christian Leadership. "She's quiet and caring, with a very gentle manner. One great mystery of the charism is the role of hospitality in forming a community around shared values. Susan is always open to meeting, to talking about issues, bringing people to the table and including all the voices that need to be there."

In Ferguson's advising work, her family spirit is apparent in the warm welcome she gives to students and in her commitment to helping students find their gifts, said Barbara Miller, a colleague in the Center for Catholic Education.

"Many professors are given the task to advise," Miller said. "Susan takes that very seriously. She gives focused advising in support of their mission to teach, but she is more than that to our students. Even if they've just had a tough day, they come to her."

In her work with the Center for Catholic Education, her years as a professor bring a vocational component to her work with students that she wants them to carry into the profession.

"I learned to be a teacher at UD," Ferguson said. "I came to see that every child who comes into a classroom is a gift to unwrap. Well, in a way, every person is a gift to unwrap. Seeing God in each person, and seeing that God gave that person potential — that's the role of the teacher. I use the same metaphor with students now. I want the students to find what gifts God gave them and how they can share those in the communities they are going into, and I want them to leave UD with that notion that they are to be servant leaders for their charges in the classroom."

That perspective is what fuels Ferguson's verve to help Catholic schools in the region to not just survive, but thrive, said Thomas Lasley, dean of the School of Education and Allied Professions.

"Susan Ferguson is an individual who understands the important role that Catholic education plays," Lasley said. "Even more significantly, she understands how committed Catholics work together to strengthen the communities in which they work. Susan evidences a community spirit both in her relationships at UD as well as in her interactions with the larger Catholic and secular communities."

For more information, contact Cilla Shindell, director of media relations, at 937-229-3257 or shindell@udayton.edu (url: <mailto:shindell@udayton.edu>) .