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Integrity and Faith

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The University of Dayton community is mourning the death of longtime trustee Mary Civille "Sue" Wesselkamper, who shepherded unprecedented growth at Chaminade University of Honolulu. As president, she headed Hawaii's only Catholic university for 13 years and brought the Marianist school from the brink of financial crisis to extraordinary expansion with vision, energy, grace and an infectious passion.

Wesselkamper, 66, died Jan. 3 at her home in Honolulu after complications from cancer. She was diagnosed with bile duct cancer in 2005. She grew up near the University of Dayton's campus and graduated from Julienne High School. Since 2000, she had served on UD's board of trustees.

A wake and visitation will be held at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 9, in the Mystical Rose Oratory on Chaminade's campus. A Eucharist of Resurrection will be celebrated at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 10, at St. Patrick's Parish in Honolulu.

"Sue was a friend and a tremendous leader who will be sorely missed," said Daniel J. Curran, president of the University of Dayton, who visited Wesselkamper in early December. "I always admired her energy, enthusiasm, passion and her outstanding work at Chaminade University. As a trustee, she offered wise counsel to the University of Dayton. She was an avid supporter of Catholic, Marianist education."

Under Wesselkamper's leadership, Chaminade's enrollment soared from 600 to approximately 2,800. A recent fundraising campaign attracted \$66 million. During her presidency, she focused on strengthening the university's Catholic, Marianist identity. Along with the University of Dayton and St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Chaminade was founded by the Society of Mary, a Roman Catholic teaching order. They are the only three Marianist universities in the world.

In December, Chaminade conferred upon her an honorary degree, renamed a science building on campus the Wesselkamper Science Center and established two endowed scholarships in her name.

"Sue is genuinely loved by faculty, staff and students," said Brother Bernard Ploeger, S.M., Chaminade's acting president, at the time of the honor. "Sue's personal image, her integrity, faith, belief in educating in the family spirit and commitment to academic quality mirrors well the Catholic, Marianist tradition of our university."

Joseph Saliba, interim provost, and Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Ferree professor of social justice and former president of the University of Dayton, are expected to travel to Hawaii for the funeral.

Before joining Chaminade University, Wesselkamper served as dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at the College of New Rochelle in New York. Originally a high school history teacher, she holds a master's degree in social work from the University of Michigan and a doctorate in social work from New York University. Survivors include her husband, Tom; daughter, Suzanne; and son, David.

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