

Monday, March 8, 2010

Longtime OU professor leaves behind legacy of learning and innovation

By Eric Reikowski, media relations assistant

Visionary, teacher, leader, writer, scholar, mentor, friend. Those are just some of the words used to describe one of the most beloved members of the Oakland University family, Dr. Pamela Morehead, who passed away in December 2008 after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

After her death, friends and colleagues of Dr. Morehead decided to celebrate her life by establishing a library memorial in honor. A total of \$1,000 raised through the All-University Fund Drive was used to purchase books for the collection, which is housed in the Educational Resource Lab (ERL) in 350 Pawley Hall. Last October, colleagues, friends and family gathered in the ERL for a special dedication ceremony.

"It was a bittersweet occasion celebrating the fullness of Dr. Morehead's life as an educator," said Dr. Adelaide Phelps, ERL director. She added that the collection consists of some 36 books on Dr. Morehead's most cherished topics, including social justice, peace, diversity, digital storytelling and teacher leadership. The collection can be accessed through Kresge Library's [online catalogue](#).

Dr. Morehead earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Wayne State University in 1974 and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Oakland in 1987 and went on to hold numerous K-12 teaching and administrative positions, including elementary school teacher, early childhood consultant, curriculum director and program coordinator.

In 2003, while serving as principal of Marie C. Graham Elementary School in Harrison Township, Dr. Morehead received her Doctor of Philosophy in Education from Oakland University and decided to devote her energies full-time to teaching and mentoring aspiring educators in Oakland's Department of Teacher Development and Educational Studies.

Having served as a lecturer in the department since 2002, Dr. Morehead was promoted to visiting assistant professor in January 2005 before achieving the rank of assistant professor in August 2006. She was nominated for Oakland University's Teaching Excellence Award in 2007.

Dr. Dyanne Tracy, professor and chair of the Teacher Development and Educational Studies Department, was a close friend and colleague of Dr. Morehead and witnessed her commitment to excellence first-hand. "She made a decision to be a professor here and be a positive influence on people just starting their teaching careers," Dr. Tracy said. "She prepared teachers to be leaders and empowered them with the same skills and passion that she had. She had extraordinary teaching skills."

As a professor at Oakland, Dr. Morehead helped prepare students for future careers teaching kindergarten through eighth grade. She also co-developed and taught courses in Teacher Leadership, a graduate-level joint degree program designed to help current teachers enhance their leadership skills in the classroom and beyond. The Teacher Leadership program was created for teachers who wish to become active in curriculum development and instruction with the goal of becoming teacher leaders, Dr. Tracy explained.

Dr. Morehead exemplified the "teacher leader" throughout her career. She was active in several professional education organizations and assumed various leadership roles, including president of the L'Anse Creuse Public Schools Administrators Association and president of the Blue Water Association for the Education of Young Children. She co-authored numerous book chapters and scholarly journal articles, delivered presentations at international conferences and secured grants to conduct research on cutting-edge topics such as digital storytelling, podcasting and teacher leadership in urban, suburban and rural school districts in Michigan.

Along with teacher leadership, Dr. Morehead was an avid proponent of technology, a passion that led her to establish a podcast series with colleague Dr. Robert Maxfield, an assistant professor in Oakland's Department of Educational Leadership. Launched in August 2007, the "Podcasts for Leaderful Schools" aimed to shed light on a diverse range of education and teacher leadership-oriented issues through insightful commentary and interviews from respected professionals in the field.

"The more I worked with Pam, I could see she had a great spirit about her," said Dr. Maxfield. However, as the podcasts progressed, Dr. Maxfield said he began to notice a change in his co-host and friend. "I could tell she wasn't feeling well," he recalled. "Then it came out that she had cancer."

Despite the diagnosis, Dr. Morehead refused to let illness get in the way of her life's work. She insisted on continuing the podcasts and even went so far as to pre-record her voice for an episode when she could not be present.

"She was devoted right up until the end," Dr. Maxfield said. "She was just a very stoic character."

Along with the memorial book collection, the "Podcasts for Leaderful Schools" remain an active part of Dr. Morehead's legacy. The Teacher Leadership program also lives on, as aspiring teacher leaders continue to pursue an educational journey, steadily guided by Dr. Morehead's enduring vision.

SUMMARY

A library memorial has been established in honor of Dr. Pamela Morehead, longtime OU professor who passed away after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

Created by Katherine Land - Deleted (land@oakland.edu) on Monday, March 8, 2010

Modified by Katherine Land - Deleted (land@oakland.edu) on Monday, March 8, 2010

Article Start Date: Monday, March 8, 2010