

▶ TAKE A LOOK

- **Chuck Norris Kicks Found Guilty, Receives Lengthy Sentence**
- **The Highest Paying Cash Back Card Of 2020 Is Here**
- **Our Hearts Go Out To Robin Roberts**
- **The Perfect Income Investment**
- **Sad News For Steve Harvey**
- **O'Reilly is Back**
- **The Highest Paying Cashback Card Has Hit The Market**
- **Clint Eastwood Finally Confirms The Rumors On Today.**
- **Triumphant Trump Tee Shirt [Limited QTY]**
- **Drink This Before Bed, Watch Your Body Fat Melt Like Crazy**

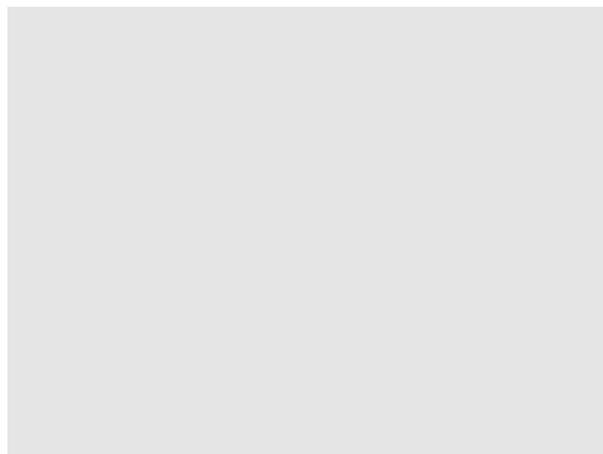
Powered by **FEEDNETWORK**

https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/former-wku-provost-s-friends-colleagues-share-memories-after-her/article_2565ec68-5a79-5f4d-9e2a-e5be96a8e47f.html

Former WKU provost's friends, colleagues share memories after her death

By AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com

Jan 10, 2020



Barbara Burch

Former Western Kentucky University Provost Barbara Burch takes her oath of office as the faculty regent in 2014, with Regent David Porter administering the oath. Burch died Sunday.

wku

Describing her as wise, open-minded, forward-thinking and “absolutely unselfish,” the many friends and colleagues of Barbara Burch remembered the former Western Kentucky University provost and interim president after her death Sunday.

“She wasn’t just our provost. She was a friend,” recalled Molly Kerby, an associate professor in WKU’s Department of Diversity and Community Studies, as she stood in a long line waiting to pay her respects at Burch’s visitation at the J.C. Kirby & Son Funeral Chapel on Wednesday.

The group of mourners, many of whom represented Burch’s mentees and colleagues she worked with to create new programs and initiatives at WKU, represented a sort of living legacy for Burch, who passed away at the age of 81.

“The WKU family has lost a great academic leader and we share our condolences with the Burch family,” WKU President Timothy Caboni wrote in a statement earlier this week. He added that Burch served on the search committee that helped bring him back to WKU as its president and represented faculty on its Board of Regents during his first several months on the job.

“(Burch) will be remembered for spearheading many of the advancements on the Hill, such as the creation of the Division of Extended Learning and Outreach, her role in the establishment of the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program and honoring the memory of her daughter with the creation of the Kelly M. Burch Institute for Transformative Practices in Higher Education. She also will be remembered for the hundreds of students she mentored,” Caboni wrote.

Earning a bachelor’s degree in English from WKU in 1959, Burch went on to complete her master’s and doctorate at Indiana University, according to a university news release.

Burch returned to WKU in 1996 as its vice president of Academic Affairs, and later became provost in 1998, holding both positions until 2010. Closing that chapter of her career at the university, Burch then worked on developing WKU’s Educational Leadership Doctoral Program, civic engagement, research and international efforts.

Burch also served as WKU’s faculty representative on the WKU Board of Regents for a three-year term and most recently chaired the WKU Sisterhood, a group of women who pool their financial gifts to award a limited number of projects at the university each year. She is the group’s current Volunteer of the Year, a WKU news release said.

“We are the university that we are today because of Dr. Burch,” said Dean May, a professor in WKU’s Department of Social Work, whose friendship with Burch spanned more than 30 years.

May's first brush with Burch happened in the fall of 1987, when he was a doctoral student at the University of Memphis, then called Memphis State University. While working as a graduate assistant in the dean's office, he recalled in a Facebook post "her vision, work ethic and leadership" and how an entourage of graduate assistants and college staff would trail Burch as she rushed from meeting to meeting across campus.

After arriving at WKU in 1995, he'd cross paths again with Burch after her return to WKU in 1996 as vice president of Academic Affairs. That year, he was promoted to program director of the university's bachelor's of social work degree program, a move that ignited his 22-year career as a program director and department head at WKU.

With Burch's support during that time, May grew the enrollment of that bachelor's degree program from 125 students to more than 300, and transformed it into a full-fledged department with a master degree program drawing 125 students.

"We would not have a (master's in social work) program, a Department of Social Work, without Dr. Burch," May told the Daily News. He stressed that she's contributed to the growth of countless other programs at WKU during her career there.

The same is true for Kerby, who worked with Burch to establish the civically-focused American Democracy Project in 2004.

Kerby described Burch as “one of the architects” of the project, which is now a network of more than 250 state colleges and universities “focused on public higher education’s role in preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens for our democracy,” according to the project’s website.

More personally, for Kerby, Burch was a leader to look up to.

“She kind of became like a second mom to me. She helped me with my dissertation. She helped me with my career,” Kerby said. “I want to be a provost because of her.”

Burch’s passion for student success is reflected in one of her more recent projects, said Pam Petty, a professor in the Kelly M. Burch Institute for Transformative Practices in Higher Education.

Created in 2018, the institute was intended as incubator for inventive ideas to promote student success at WKU, from retention to graduation. From students’ physical and mental health, to their sense of belonging on campus, Petty said Burch had a laser-like focus on students.

“She was very holistic about the kind of place Western (Kentucky University) could be to meet the needs of all the students that came to us,” Petty said.

What Petty remembers most vividly about Burch, is that “Anytime I had an idea about helping students ... that her door was open and that her ears were turned on.”

– Follow education reporter Aaron Mudd on Twitter @BGDN_edbeat or visit bgdailynews.com.

Aaron Mudd

Education reporter. Covers education and related issues, focusing primarily on the Bowling Green and Warren County public school districts and Western Kentucky University.

 **RECOMMENDED**

\$10 Stock You Should Buy Today

A Tragic End Today For Laura Ingraham

O'Reilly is Back

The Perfect Income Investment

Powered by **FEEDNETWORK**