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4-13-2012

### **Dr. Darlene Gravett Works to Memorialize a Dear Friend**

Office of University Communications

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# Dr. Darlene Gravett Works to Memorialize a Dear Friend

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Office of University Communications

April 13, 2012

## *Retired Associate Provost Returns in the Wake of Dr. Gayle Price's Passing*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.— When longtime Gardner-Webb professor and administrator Dr. Darlene Gravett retired in June 2007, she did not imagine returning to work, let alone under such difficult circumstances. Yet, as the University mourns the sudden and unexpected loss of Dr. Gayle Price, Gravett now finds herself working to fill the place and honor the memory of her dear friend.

“Gayle and I were friends and colleagues at another college before coming to Gardner-Webb, and then we enjoyed our time together here for all those years,” Gravett said. “She was a vivacious, extremely bright, interesting woman with wonderful talents, and I miss her a lot.”

Gravett was recently named interim associate provost for professional and graduate studies, the position she held before her retirement. Price, who was Gravett's successor as associate provost, died in March after a courageous battle with cancer.

Gravett's history in higher education is a storied one. After a decade at North Greenville University, she joined the English faculty at Gardner-Webb in 1989, earning a reputation for both rigor and compassion in the classroom. She eventually became Gardner-Webb's first female dean (Graduate School), and when she was chosen to fill the new associate provost's role in 2004, she became the University's first female member of the senior staff.

“I am so very grateful for the willingness of Dr. Darlene Gravett to return to this post,” said Dr. Ben Leslie, Gardner-Webb's provost. “She was named Associate Provost emerita upon her retirement in recognition of her exceptional leadership among the faculty and her commitment to our students.”

Gravett has also been an active civic leader in Cleveland County, even after her retirement. She was the first woman elected to the Boiling Springs Town Council, and has served in leadership roles with Rotary Club, the Broad River Council, and numerous other organizations.

In fact, Gravett just recently served as coordinator of an oral history project for Destination Cleveland County, helping to conduct, compile and transcribe a hundred interviews with Cleveland County natives. The workload, she says, was like having a part-time job.

“I have enjoyed retirement,” Gravett said. “I’ve loved having the ability to set my own schedule, to occasionally sleep in a little late, and most of all, to read a book for two hours if I want without having to feel guilty.”

Still, she did not hesitate to come back to work, especially to an office that still evokes the memory of her dear friend. “Gayle had decorated this office beautifully. It was a comfort to have her things around me, honestly. If her family hadn’t wanted them, I probably would’ve left them up.”

She acknowledges that a desire to serve Gardner-Webb in its time of need played a role in her decision to accept the position. But even more, it was a chance to honor her friend.

“We all expected Gayle to be sitting here for at least another 10 years,” she said. “The way I look at it, this is an honor, to do this in Gayle’s memory.”

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University offers a comprehensive academic experience that introduces students to the diverse world of ideas and to the people who think them, preparing them for career success and for engaged, responsible citizenship in their professional, civic, and spiritual communities.*

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