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Gardner-Webb Student Development Suite Named for Longtime and Beloved Administrator

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON DECEMBER 1, 2020



Dr. Dee M. Hunt Recognized for her Nearly 40 Years of Service to Students

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Officials at Gardner-Webb University celebrated the naming of the Dr. Dee M. Hunt Student Development Suite in the Tucker Student Center on Nov. 30 at 3:30 pm. The honor recognizes Hunt's nearly 40 years of service to students at Gardner-Webb.

Hunt served in a many roles throughout her tenure—as a professor, coach, administrator, dean, department chair and in many additional capacities. Known for her uncanny blend of tough love mixed with an abundance of compassion, she was the perfect fit for her ultimate role as Gardner-Webb Vice President of Student Development.



▲ Lisa Tucker, left, speaks with Dr. Dee Hunt at the ceremony to rename the Student Development Suite in Hunt's honor. Tucker, a member of the Gardner-Webb Board of Trustees and president of Shoe Show, says Hunt's encouragement helped her find success. Her parents, Robert and Carolyn Tucker, gave the donation that made the Tucker Student Center a reality. Dr. Hunt served the University for nearly 40 years and has been foundational in the growth of GWU.

"In my brief time with the University, I learned quickly that Dr. Hunt's passion was and will forever be the students," stated Nate Evans, vice president for Advancement. "The Dr. Dee M. Hunt Student Development Suite is a testament to the impact she made on so many lives and her legacy here at GWU."

Hunt joined the GWU faculty in 1978 as associate professor of health education and physical education. She distinguished herself as a coach and consultant in the field of women's athletics, particularly volleyball and softball. She also provided distinguished leadership to the Department of Physical Education, Wellness and Sport Studies as chair from 1988 to 1995 and again from 1998 to 1999. As the founding dean of the College of Education, Hunt provided innovative and energetic leadership, directing the program's inception and accreditation from 1995-99. Over the years, students gave her the nickname, "Doc Hunt," which was used by everyone on campus.



▲ At left, Gardner-Webb President Dr. William M. Downs and Dr. Dee Hunt share a moment during the ceremony. In the photo on the right, Hunt shares some of her memories.

She continued to teach physical education until 2010, when she was named vice president of Student Development and dean of students. Moving into the administrative role was a tough decision, because she loved interacting with her students in the classroom. In her administrative role, she met directly with students, parents and family members to resolve various challenges and planned and implemented improvements in the Student Development arena.

In 2012, Hunt successfully directed the physical move of the Student Development division into the newly constructed Tucker Student Center, which she helped plan. "That center has made an unimaginable difference for the student body," Hunt observed. "The availability of the building and all the things we can do with it is amazing."

The dedication ceremony tops the list of her favorite GWU memories. "Robert Tucker surprised me—surprised us all—with an additional half-million dollar gift," she marveled. "He didn't know he was going to do it. I'll never, ever forget that."

Hunt served as vice president of Student Development until she retired in 2017. Reflecting on her 39 years at the University, she described what she hoped would be her legacy at GWU. "That I made a difference," she stated. "That every contact I've had with any kid—no matter how brief or how long or deep or shallow—made them a better person."

One year after her retirement from Gardner-Webb, Hunt became the first faculty member to receive three emeriti titles. On May 4, 2018, she was honored for her service as a professor emerita of physical education, dean emerita of the College of Education and vice president emerita of Student Development.

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