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Gardner-Webb College of Education Remembers Friend and Colleague

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CAMPUS NEWS

Gardner-Webb College of Education Remembers Friend and Colleague

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON APRIL 29, 2021



Dr. Cindy McKinney, Retired Professor, Passed Away on April 26, 2021

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Described by her colleagues as an integral part of the College of Education, Dr. Cindy McKinney is being remembered for her Christian spirit and the contributions she made during her 25 years at Gardner-Webb University. McKinney, a native of Rutherford County, N.C., passed away on April 26, 2021.



▲ Dr. Cindy McKinney

Her friend and former colleague, Dr. Anita Sanders, assistant professor of education, said McKinney's dedication to others was visible in her classroom, in her determination to ensure social justice reform and in her service to Gardner-Webb. "Scripture asks the question—'Who can find a virtuous woman?'" Sanders reflected. "'Whose strength and honor is known, who speaks with wisdom, and faithful instructions is upon her lips. And through it all, she watches over the affairs of her home and her husband praises her.' Family, friends and former colleagues found such a woman in Dr. Cindy McKinney."

McKinney was a retired professor and coordinator of Elementary Education and director of Student Teaching and Field Experiences. She was also a graduate of Gardner-Webb, receiving her Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education in 1986 and her Master of Arts Degree in Early Childhood Education in 1989. As an undergraduate, she received an honors scholarship to attend Gardner-Webb. As

a student, she was named to Who's Who and earned recognition on the dean's list. She also received the Student Teacher of the Year Award.

Dr. Lane Wesson, professor and coordinator of Elementary Education and director of Clinical Experiences, worked with McKinney for 17 years. For many years, McKinney held the same job as Wesson. "Dr. McKinney was very protective of her students and did everything that she could to make sure they had all the resources they needed to be successful," Wesson reflected. "It is my understanding that she oftentimes kept up with candidates after they graduated and started a new chapter of their lives. She had a heart full of love, compassion, and grace. I will miss her."

Before coming to Gardner-Webb in 1992, McKinney taught third grade in the Rutherford County (N.C.) School System for six years. In 1997, she graduated with a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Clemson (S.C.) University.

She received the Gardner-Webb Excellence in Teaching Award in 2004, and in 2009, she was honored as a Distinguished Alumna of Gardner-Webb.



▲ Dr. Cindy McKinney presents an award to a student.

In 2013, McKinney was recognized by Gardner-Webb with the Faculty Community Engagement Award for the various ways she served the community. She volunteered with such groups as the Ruby Hunt YMCA in Boiling Springs and Cleveland County CORE, an organization that focuses on closing the achievement gap for students. She was also a leader in a female forum initiative to create informal mentoring sessions with students at middle and secondary school levels.

Sanders said through all her friend's accomplishments, McKinney's Christian spirit was evident. "Her Christian compassion and kindness were exemplified in all of her works whether professional or personal," Sanders affirmed. "In every action of her life, the Lord guided her path and revealed her anointed spirit. Whereas, death has invaded our ranks and removed from the walks of life our beloved former colleague, Dr. Cindy McKinney, her soul has departed to walk amongst the angels. On a personal note, there is no doubt that she has already requested a conference with Jesus."

Moreover, Sanders said everyone who knew McKinney would forever treasure and remember her many sacrifices in helping others. "The great scholar and poet, Dr. Maya Angelou, sums up Dr. McKinney's life best in her poem, Phenomenal Woman," Sanders observed. "Now you understand just why her head was not bowed. She didn't shout or jump about or have to talk really loud. When you saw her passing, it ought to have made you proud. It was in the click of her heels, the bend of her hair, the palm of her hand, the need for her care. 'Cause she was a woman phenomenally."

A graveside service is planned for Sunday, May 2, at 3 p.m. at New Bethel Independent Church Cemetery, Dawkins-McDowell Road, Forest City.

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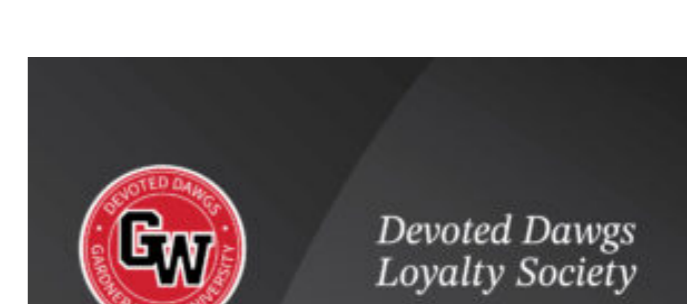


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