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Temple Celebrates Evelyn Keiser

At 84 years young, Evelyn Keiser, cofounder of Keiser University, is still the first on campus each morning. She and her son, Dr. Arthur Keiser of the Keiser family, founded the Keiser School in 1977 to serve the educational needs of career-focused students and to help meet the workforce demands of the growing healthcare industry in South Florida.



Keiser

They never dreamt just 31 years later, their one student and one program start-up endeavor would grow into one of Florida's largest independent, regionally accredited universities with 13 locations including a graduate school, nearly 12,000 students and over 40 degree programs.

Small Beginnings

Ms. Keiser fondly recalls the first day the school opened. She remembers her first and only student at that time, Terry Prezzemello, arriving late and fearing she had disrupted the class. Keiser nervously told her, "It's okay dear, you are the class."

On Sept. 26, Keiser, a 1945 graduate of Temple University, was inducted into her alma mater's Gallery of Success. Now in its 11th year, the Gallery of Success is a collaborative effort between Temple University's Career Services Center and Office of Alumni Relations.

The Gallery's mission is two-fold: to provide current students an opportunity to recognize and be inspired by the success of Temple graduates who have gone before them and achieved success in their chosen fields, and to honor Temple alumni who have distinguished themselves in their careers serving as an inspiration to others in the attainment of their Temple degrees.

Keiser graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in medical technology, one of only a few women in that field of study. As a military wife, she traveled throughout the United States where her education and ambition for the medical field led to her employment in several hospitals and medical labs.

After World War II, she returned to Philadelphia and opened her own medical lab which she operated for more than 12 years. As the demands of motherhood increased, Keiser sold her medical lab and embarked on a rewarding teaching career. She joined the Franklin School of Sciences and led the Medical Sciences and Lab Technology programs.

In 1963, Keiser moved with her family to South Florida. In 1970, she helped begin the medical division at the newly opened Fort Lauderdale campus of Charron-Williams College. She left in 1977 to launch the first Keiser School with Dr. Keiser and while he tackled the administrative duties, Keiser assumed the teaching and faculty development responsibilities.

Lab Roots

In 1981, another dream of hers became a reality when the Medical Laboratory Technician program was added to the Keiser School course offerings. Under Keiser's direction, the program received accreditation from the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences, confirming the highest quality in medical laboratory academics and training.

The Keiser School name progression from Keiser Institute of Technology (1982) to Keiser College (1986) and Keiser University (2006) reflects milestones including new degree programs, multiple branch campuses, accreditation achievements and the addition of the graduate school offering master's degrees. Nearly three decades later, Keiser is still active in the university serving as chairwoman of the Board of Advisors.

Throughout her lifelong career in the medical and higher education fields, Evelyn Keiser has been awarded honors too numerous to list including "Teacher of the Year" and "Educator of the Year."

In February 2004, Keiser was awarded an honorary doctorate from Beijing University citing her commitment to educational articulation agreements between China and the United States.

To the faculty and administration of Keiser University, Keiser sets the example all students deserve the highest quality academic instruction. As a result, the top honor awarded to faculty members that have excelled in a proactive teaching approach focused on successful student learning outcomes was recently re-named the "Evelyn C. Keiser Teaching Excellence Award."

Keiser and her son never forgot that first student who took a chance on the family's dream of shaking up the status quo in higher education, by developing a quality, career focused educational institution with a student's first philosophy.

Terry Prezzemello, now Terry Schmidt, graduated 30 years ago, and after a career as a registered nurse and in corporate sales, she returned to Keiser to help establish the university's Associate of Science in nursing degree program.

--Keiser University

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