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Carl And Cynda Zeidler Pledge \$500,000 To Create Peter Slavish Endowed Professorship At Blackburn College

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CARLINVILLE - Carl and Cynda Zeidler have pledged \$500,000 to Blackburn College to create the Peter Slavish Endowed Professorship in Art at Blackburn College. This gift honors Dr. Peter Slavish, a beloved Art professor at Blackburn for more than 23 years. Endowed Chairs and Professorships not only recognize outstanding achievement, but also provide permanent financial support for the research, special equipment and resources, and creative endeavors of distinguished faculty members.

Dr. Slavish was married to Cynda Zeidler until his death in 1996. After completing degrees at Penn State and Indiana State, and beginning his teaching career at Eastern Illinois University, Slavish was invited to Blackburn College to give a ceramics demonstration in the spring of 1973. "One can easily say his meeting with Blackburn was "love at first sight"," Cynda explained. "The following year Pete left his tenured position at EIU and joined the Blackburn faculty in what would become a 23-year academic adventure."

Several pieces of his work are housed in the permanent art collection of the Illinois State Museum in Springfield and displayed at the Southern Illinois University School of Law in Carbondale. In addition to his legacy of enlightened students and artistic endeavors, Slavish at various points served as an advisor to Blackburn's unique student-managed Work Program, Director of Auxiliary Services, and he even ran the campus bookstore. "No one was a bigger voice and proponent of the student work program," Cynda continued. "In spite of serious health problems, his devotion to Blackburn never faltered."

"On behalf of the entire Blackburn Community, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Carl and Cynda Zeidler," Blackburn president Mark L. Biermann said. "Pete Slavish is an incredible example of the impact Blackburn faculty can have on students and on our community, a community in which students build long-lasting relationships with faculty and staff members, and are mentored by experts in their field. This generous gift will help support outstanding faculty members and a remarkable Art program, and it will help to ensure that future generations of students can benefit from the transformational Blackburn education that meant so much to Dr. Slavish."

Receiving a kidney transplant on his 39th birthday gave Dr. Slavish the freedom and opportunity to acquire more education. "He spent a summer in Mexico studying earthenware and a summer in a Jesuit compound in remote Minnesota learning old concepts of firing and kiln building," Cynda shared. "He brought all of these experiences back to campus to be shared with his enthusiastic students, broadening their ideas and inspiring creativity."

She added, “I can only imagine what this endowment would mean to Peter. Sharing art was his passion, and I think he would feel proud about this exclamation mark on his career and what this gift will provide to future Blackburn artists.”