

Gift Of \$500,000 To Establish Sonja Faust Hudren Endowed Professorship In Education At Blackburn College

February 9 2022 1:10 PM



CARLINVILLE - Blackburn College has received a \$500,000 gift to create the Sonja Faust Hudren Endowed Professorship in Education. Hudren's brother, Blackburn Trustee Jim Faust, his wife Helen, and their children Kristen, Erika, and Stephen established the Professorship to honor her incredible passion for teaching and to preserve her legacy at Blackburn.

Originally from Chicago, both siblings attended and graduated from Blackburn - Faust in 1964 and Hudren in 1966. "I wanted to go away for college and discovered in a brochure that you could get to Blackburn by train," Faust said. "The College was a very friendly place and, when my sister came down to visit me, she enjoyed the campus as much as I did."

After earning her bachelor's degree in elementary education, Hudren spent nearly 25 years in the classroom for the Dundee Community School District where she was well-liked by students and widely respected by her colleagues. Hudren cared deeply about the children she taught and took great joy in watching them grow throughout their adolescence. Her time in the classroom was cut short and she succumbed to cancer in 1995.

Endowed professorships not only recognize exceptional achievement, but also provide permanent financial support for the research, special equipment and resources, and innovative endeavors of distinguished faculty members. Hudren was an outspoken advocate for education and known for getting things done while others were busy talking. It was her action-oriented nature and the critically important work of Blackburn's Education department addressing the teacher shortage throughout the state that made this an incredible opportunity for Faust to honor his sister's legacy. "What's beautiful about Blackburn is their ability to prepare highly-qualified teachers who want to make a difference in rural settings," he stated. "I'm a huge believer in the importance of elementary education and Blackburn's department is incredibly strong."

Dr. Cindy Rice, Professor of Education at Blackburn, was honored to receive this gift. She elaborated, "We, in teacher education, are extremely grateful for the generosity shown to our students by Mr. Faust and his family. The Sonja Faust Hudren Endowed Professorship in Education will provide an opportunity for the faculty of our department to pursue continued excellence and growth as mentors of teachers for many years to come. We thank Mr. Faust and his family for their commitment to teaching and Blackburn College."

Dr. George Malo '66, a Blackburn Trustee and classmate of Hudren, shared, "I was pleased to hear that Jim Faust has endowed a professorship in the Department of Education in memory of his sister. She was a classmate and also an assistant when I was Dining Hall Head. Her proficiency was shown in her becoming Dining Hall Head and later, after graduation, as a lead elementary teacher in a Chicago area school district known for its competent teachers. Thus, with Blackburn's continuing, academically strong Department of Education, it is very fitting to name an endowed professorship after one of its successful graduates, Sonja Faust Hudren."

“We are so thankful for the generous gift from Mr. Faust and his family that allows us to establish the Sonja Faust Hudren Endowed Professorship in Education,” Blackburn President Mark Biermann said. “An endowed professorship is timeless and such a gift ensures that Blackburn College will always be able to provide outstanding teaching and learning opportunities in education. A gift such as this honors Sonja and benefits our faculty and students in perpetuity. We are so grateful for the foresight and commitment to

Blackburn College that is displayed through this gift.”

About Blackburn College

Founded in 1837, Blackburn College is a four-year, Presbyterian-related, co-educational liberal arts college located in Carlinville, IL. One of only ten federally-recognized Work Colleges, Blackburn has the only program in the nation fully managed by students. Balancing academic rigor and experiential learning, each student at Blackburn gains tangible experience and develops critical skills by contributing to their community, all while building a resume and earning their degree. U.S. News & World Report recognized Blackburn College as one of the top Liberal Arts Colleges in the Nation for Social Mobility in their Best Colleges lists for 2020, 2021, and 2022. The Center for Education & the Workforce at Georgetown University ranked Blackburn as a top performer for Earnings-Price Return - 209% (#1 in IL, #10 in the U.S.) and Net Price (#1 in IL; #11 in the U.S.). The Washington Monthly twice ranked Blackburn as the best baccalaureate college in Illinois.