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Investing in Higher Education

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Kirby (Noland) Dyess '68

Kirby (Noland) Dyess '68 learned early on she could do whatever she put her mind to.

That legacy, instilled by her father and reinforced by a series of mentors, has been the basis for successful and diversified careers in biochemistry, high technology management and most recently, education.

Dyess, founder of Austin Capital and a member of the Linfield College Board of Trustees, was appointed to the Oregon State Board of Higher Education in January. She chairs the Academic Excellence and Economic Development Committee, focused on research areas that will become economic development engines for the state.

"I can't imagine my career if I hadn't pursued a college degree," she said. "I want to work on whatever I can to increase the investment in higher education."

As a Linfield student, Dyess entered the male-dominated

physics lab and competed on the men's ski team. She immersed herself in the Linfield Research Institute, conducting research in holography, a relatively new field at the time, studying three-dimensional images formed with lasers.

As a junior, Dyess returned to her home state of Idaho, earning a bachelor's degree in physics from the University of Idaho. She then pursued post-graduate work in biochemistry and business at Portland State University and Stanford University.

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After a brief stint with a law firm, Dyess spent a decade at ICN Medical Laboratories Inc. in Portland, where she started and operated the Diagnostic Products Division based on her research in endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism.

She joined Intel's staffing department in 1979, where her curiosity and love of a challenge propelled her through the ranks. When she retired in 2002 as vice president and director of operations for Intel Capital, Intel's strategic

investment program, she managed a portfolio of over 400 national and international companies and had handled more than 50 Intel mergers and acquisitions.

"Every time there was an opportunity, I looked at it from the perspective of 'can I learn something new and can I make a difference?'" she said. "And that continues to guide me today."

Professionally, Dyess has been pleased to have been part of a number of successful teams that have worked together for a common goal.

"I see that with members of the Linfield board frequently and now with the Oregon Board of Higher Education, all of whom are focused on the same objective," she said. "It's amazing what can happen when you bring those diverse perspectives together and deliver exquisite results."

In addition to being a member of the Board of Trustees for Linfield, Dyess is a member of the Menasha Corporation Board of Directors, the Merix Corporation board and the H2F Media board, and she chairs the Business Advisory board for the University of Oregon Lundquist College of Business.

If there's one area Dyess has yet to master, it's retirement. She remains challenged by her work as a personal investor with Austin Capital and with her board responsibilities.

"It's all a labor of love," she said. "I think I've flunked retirement but the good news is, I love what I do."

—Laura Davis