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2019: Dr. Margie Pinnell

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During Women's History Month, the University of Dayton Women's Center coordinates, as an experiential learning opportunity for students, an annual exhibit highlighting the contributions women have made at the University of Dayton.

Theme for 2019: Trailblazers

2019: Dr. Margie Pinnell

Written by Jeremy Hill '19

When Dr. Margie Pinnell was discerning what to study, engineering wasn't even her first intuition. Growing up near Youngstown, OH, Dr. Pinnell developed an affinity for animals, so becoming a veterinarian seemed the obvious route. She eagerly signed up to volunteer at a local animal hospital; however, her love for animals unfortunately did not translate well to a potential career. On three days of volunteering, Dr. Pinnell passed out three times and was asked not to return to volunteer. Disheartened, she was encouraged by her mother to focus on other hobbies, such as her curiosity to tinker. As a child, she built herself a doll house to go along with a doll set she received as a gift. With new direction, Dr. Pinnell began her journey to become the Associate Dean for Faculty and Staff Development in the School of Engineering.



Before even considering a role as an administrator at the University of Dayton, Dr. Pinnell was first an undergraduate student studying Mechanical Engineering. Like many of the current engineering students, coursework and expected learning outcomes did not come easy. Dr. Pinnell attributes much of her success to the professors that helped her along the way. For example, Dr. James Snide encouraged her to apply for a co-op position at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Little did she know that this experience would be life changing.

Dr. Pinnell applied for this position and was hired as a co-op in the Composite Materials Branch at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. It was during this co-op that Dr. Pinnell was introduced to research. She engaged in the characterization of the properties of a then-emerging material - carbon fiber composites. In her own words, research is fantastic because there is opportunity to "[work] on things no one else is working on and to learn so many new and interesting things." Through her work at Wright-Patt, Dr. Pinnell earned her Master's

degree in Materials Engineering from UD. Quickly, her supervisors recognized Dr. Pinnell's ability to lead and inspire, so they transitioned her to program management. However, she moved away from such roles to focus more on her family for the next 10 years. While home with her three children, Dr. Pinnell earned her PhD in Materials Engineering from UD. It was through this degree that she began teaching select courses in engineering technology, and mechanical and materials engineering at UD, ultimately recognizing her passion for education.

Her dedication to inspiring students through community-engaged learning bloomed with her work in nurturing the development of the ETHOS program at UD. At the time, ETHOS was new and very small, capturing the interest of a handful of students. This program is deeply rooted in the Marianist philosophy of service: building relationships with communities to co-create solutions. Dr. Pinnell worked with the ETHOS program for ten years, helping to develop a framework that includes preparation in appropriate technology, safety and security, and cultural awareness. The program grew into a center and is currently under the direction of Dr. Malcolm Daniels. Much of the work that Dr. Pinnell completed in the area of community-engaged learning is published in an array of papers and journal articles that she has compiled and composed throughout her illustrious career thus far. From a handful to hundreds of applications, the ETHOS Center is now a pillar of Marianist excellence boasted highly to prospective students.

When asked about her biggest accomplishment in her career thus far, the ever-others-centered Dr. Pinnell spoke about her involvement within various communities she is a part of. She is proud of the interdisciplinary work she has done on campus, specifically citing a project she did with the Girl Scouts in tandem with the Department of Health and Sport Science. In a paraphrase of her words, Dr. Pinnell is blessed to be in her current role. She is blessed with the ability to open doors for new initiatives for the School of Engineering. She is blessed to work with current faculty and staff, and help them to achieve what they wish to achieve. She is blessed to have the opportunity to shape the minds of engineers of the future, reinforcing the importance of service and selflessness to her students.

Along with her current role, Dr. Pinnell also sits as the Bernhard Schmidt Chair in Engineering Leadership as well as holds a joint appointment with the Bioengineering Graduate Program. She still holds an affinity for animals, tending and caring for the many dogs, cats, horses, fish, and frogs that accompany her and family.