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Cardinal Stritch University

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THE TROUBADOUR

DECEMBER 7, 2009

ISSUE 124



SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

When the opportunity came to become president of Cardinal Stritch University, I felt that I had been “called” to this position – that God had some work for me to do to help move this University forward.

Every organization has its own unique challenges, and as the weeks went on I soon came to see that the challenges facing Stritch were greater than anticipated. I came to Milwaukee with enthusiasm, finding a wealth of dedicated and skilled individuals.

One of the major challenges was dealing with financial situations that prevented the University from moving forward in its development. We created a bold plan for new growth just as the national economy was declining. In addition, our financial systems were not as sophisticated as we would have hoped to give us an early warning of the challenges we would face. Clearly, the dire external

financial environment affected Stritch as it affected nearly every organization in America.

With the support and counsel of the Stritch community members who are dedicated to helping the University grow, we tackled these and many other issues with an eye constantly on the future of Stritch.

Despite these challenges, we have had a year of which we can be proud. The City Center opened, increasing our service, mission and visibility in the city of Milwaukee. Assisi Hall opened to welcome one of the largest freshmen classes in Stritch’s history. This year’s Scholarship Night exceeded our expectations, raising \$90,000.

However, there can be no doubt that challenges remain, and during these last few months, I have had to face some serious personal challenges as well.

One of my sons is struggling with a very sudden and severe illness that has yet to be completely diagnosed. He came to live with us here in Milwaukee and his condition improved, but a few weeks ago he took a turn for the worse. My belief has always been, “family first,” and it is most important now to tend to my family, even though I have come to feel that Milwaukee is my home.

Therefore, I have decided to step aside as president of Cardinal Stritch University, so that I may devote all my energies to helping my son and my family heal back in Pittsburgh. I will be leaving my post at the end of the year, on Dec. 31, 2009. Interim leadership has yet to be decided by the Board.

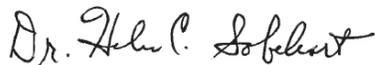
It is extremely difficult to leave Milwaukee behind, because so many people embraced my husband, Joe, and me with open arms. I was happy to become a part of many organizations that are doing important work to make Milwaukee and southeast Wisconsin a better place to live and do business. I will miss my work with the various organizations dedicated to improving the education of all of Milwaukee and wish them success in their missions.

As I reflect back upon my time here, I believe I have done the tough job that I was called to do: To carry on the Franciscan charism as the first lay president, to make hard decisions, to help begin the process of moving Stritch into a more prominent position of leadership in Milwaukee, and to be the lightning rod for the challenges that came across our threshold. A lightning rod is a good thing – it absorbs the shock of lightning strikes so that the house can remain standing. I have also listened to the sometimes varied or even conflicting concerns from all vital parts of the University.

I thank those of you who demonstrated the Franciscan values every day - those who demonstrated reverence for all creation, who endeavored to make peace, who demonstrated a caring community, and who showed compassion. I have seen these values demonstrated by the Sisters of St. Francis, faculty, staff, students, alumni, board members, donors, and friends of this fine institution. I especially want to recognize the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi and our greatest treasure – our fine students.

Sometimes leadership means knowing when to step aside and let the organization grow out of lessons that have been learned. Indeed, in a document provided by the Franciscan sisters, the statement is made, “Within this rough and tumble economic world of today, as leaders we own the obligation to manage and sustain our institutions and their missions for the future, and pass on our institutions and their services to the next generation.” I thank you for giving me the opportunity to lead Cardinal Stritch University through a major transition and wish you all peace and light as Stritch moves into the future.

In gratitude,

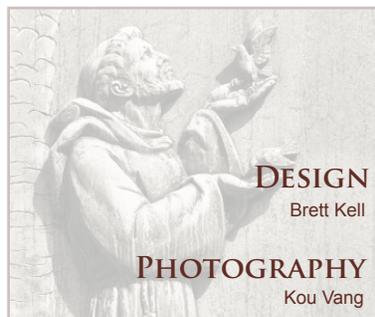


Dr. Helen C. Sobehart

THE TROUBADOUR

The Troubadour supports the overall mission, goals and objectives of Cardinal Stritch University, and is meant to serve as a communications tool for the campus community. If you have feedback or story ideas, please contact Public Relations at prdept@stritch.edu.

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