

PITTSBURGH BUSINESS TIMES

WOMEN of influence

New Carlow University President Kathy W. Humphrey brims with enthusiasm in seeking to spread the word about all that is good about Carlow while also offering a shrewd observation on the nature of leadership.

"It's an interesting feeling actually because you understand that you are taking on the mantle and that if the institution thrives, it's because of the team," she said. "But if it fails, it's you."

In March, Humphrey was inaugurated as Carlow's 11th president. An Oakland resident who previously worked at the University of Pittsburgh as senior vice chancellor for student engagement and secretary to the University of Pittsburgh Board of Trustees, she starts in her new role keenly aware of her responsibility to Carlow's student base, of which 44% are first-generation college students for whom an educational trajectory into well-paying careers can be vitally important.

"Really, my biggest goal is to make sure we are an institution that is intensively who we say we are," she said, adding that translates to "meeting the needs of our students and meeting the needs of the community."

For now, Humphrey is working to learn everything she can about the Catholic institution of higher learning, as well as meeting and talking with everyone involved. That has included eating in the dining hall to be able to interact with Carlow's students.

But she has also quickly engaged in a major decision when she made clear that who Carlow will be is a university that keeps its St. Agnes Center, a former Catholic church that was slated to be torn down to be part of a new front-door redevelopment project along Fifth Avenue.

Humphrey called the church "magnificent" and noted that Carlow was pivoting to a different approach to build a health sciences facility that's expected to serve four new graduate programs on a neighboring site while planning to renovate and upgrade the former church so that it will host events and other functions.

As she looks to the future, Humphrey acknowledges Carlow is facing the same challenge as many other smaller universities: A demographic cliff in the next few years of a dramatically declining cohort of college-aged students.

"What the workforce looks like and what the workforce needs is shifting who we are," she said, adding that, "the entire enterprise is changing every day," and noting how the pandemic played a key role in the ongoing changes.

She also said raising money and developing different revenue streams is going to be an important part of her job.

It's a mix of responsibilities that combine being aware of the university's daily needs while also understanding how her decisions will imprint on Carlow's future.

"When you're working at a university, you can't just think about today. You have to think about the next 100 years," she said.

It's a line of thought in which Humphrey also is quick to include Carlow's students as well.

"When you change a life at Carlow, you're changing generations," she said.

-Tim Schooley



Kathy W.
HUMPHREY

Title: President, Carlow University

Family: Husband, Lyle Humphrey; two sons, David and Daniel, daughter-in-law Natalie Humphrey (David's wife); first grand baby, Elijah

Education: Bachelor's, University of Central Missouri; master's, higher education administration, University of Missouri; Ph.D., educational leadership, Saint Louis University

Hobbies: Biking the Pittsburgh trails, making jewelry, enjoying theater and the arts

Community involvement: Very active in the Macedonia Church of Pittsburgh. Serves on various boards, including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, United Way of Southwestern

Pennsylvania, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland Pittsburgh branch, Leadership Pittsburgh, Gwen's Girls, Blood Science Foundation, chairs The Forbes Funds. Also serves on the executive committee of the International Women's Forum of Pittsburgh; member of the Chairman's Council for the Pittsburgh American Red Cross' Board of Directors and the Advisory Council for the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

FAVORITES

Book: The Bible

Local restaurant: Square Cafe

Inspirational quote or life lesson: "To whom much is given much is required." — Luke 12:48

Vacation destination: Taking brief cruises.

CARLOW
UNIVERSITY