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HOLYOKE

Parting gift: \$1 million helps HCC, non-traditional students

Professor endows college to help those who follow her path

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To Elaine N. Marieb, few things in the world mattered more than learning and helping others.

She showed that commitment through one of her final gifts: a \$1 million donation to Holyoke Community College.



AMANDA
SBRISCIA

Announced this week at a trustees' meeting, the gift from the Elaine Nicpon Marieb Foundation will support the college's programs for nontraditional age students. The gift will have a major impact, as one-third of HCC's student population is

over the age of 25.

"With this type of investment, the college is able to dramatically enhance its work to support, retain, and graduate students coming to college later in life or returning to college in hopes of finally earning their degree," said

Amanda Sbriscia, vice president of institutional advancement and executive director of the college foundation.

Marieb's contribution will also be life-changing for generations of HCC students to come, according to Sbriscia.

"This gift will allow us to reach more non-traditional learners in the Pioneer Valley and Western Massachusetts area," said college president Christina Royal. She added that the college intends to expand academic programs, opportunities and support for those students.

Marieb herself was a non-traditional age student, earning her bachelor's degree from Westfield State University in 1964 when she was 28. She went on to earn her master's degree at Mount Holyoke College and a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst before being hired as a professor of biology at HCC in 1969. She taught at the college for 24 years.

While teaching at HCC, Marieb enrolled in the college's associate degree nursing program.



ELAINE N.
MARIEB

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She later earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from Fitchburg State University and a master's degree with a specialization in gerontology from UMass-Amherst.

As a student and a professor, Marieb had a perspective on learning that led her to author or co-author over 10 best-selling books and laboratory manuals on anatomy and physiology. In 2016, she took the seventh spot on Time Magazine's "100 Most-Read Female Writers in College Classes," a list which also included Mary Shelley, Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Toni Morrison. Her textbooks are estimated to be in over 3,000 classrooms worldwide.

Prior to her death in December, Marieb donated over \$1.5 million to HCC through various small and large gifts, including another \$1 million donation in 2014. That money helped to establish scholarships for women starting or returning to college, support the construction of the college's new Center for Health Education and Center for Life



In this photo from 2014, Holyoke Community College held a lunch to thank professor emerita and alumna Elaine Marieb for her \$1 million donation. Here she is with college president William Messner. Marieb, who died in December, endowed the college with another \$1 million gift to support non-traditional students. (DON TREEGER / THE REPUBLICAN FILE PHOTO)

Sciences and build the Elaine Marieb New Pathways Center.

The center has a computer room and study area for students in the New Directions and Pathways programs, which will benefit from the latest gift. A ceremonial check is on display in the Marieb Center.

"Elaine had the foresight to recognize these demographic shifts, and she had a belief in HCC as the place where nontraditional students could thrive," Sbriscia said.

Irma Medina, coordinator of the Pathways Program, emphasized the gift's message to students: "It says we

will invest in you because we believe in you. We want you to dream big and we will help you go far."

Marieb moved to Florida in the 1980s, where her impact on education continued. She taught at Florida Gulf Coast University, and from 2012 to 2017 she donated \$15 million to the school. Never forgetting her roots, Marieb made annual trips back to Holyoke Community College to visit with students and faculty at the Marieb Center.

Marieb died from dementia with associated Parkinson's disease Dec. 20 at the age of 82.