MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
HELEN E. GIBBONS
1929-2017

Dr. Helen Elizabeth Gibbons, aged eighty-seven, Associate Professor Emerita of Business Administration and Education at IPFW and Indiana University, passed away in Bloomington, Indiana on February 26, 2017 after a battle with Parkinson’s disease. Born June 28, 1929 in New Castle, Pennsylvania, Helen was a daughter of John and Gertrude Gibbons.

Helen earned a BS degree from Villa Maria College, Buffalo, New York, in 1951, and a Master of Education degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1954. In 1960, Helen earned her Doctorate of Education from Indiana University. She started her career at Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne in July 1972, and in November 1972 proposed the Business Education and the Master of Science in Business Education. Helen was greatly disappointed when the IU Bloomington campus failed to approve IPFW’s proposed Business Education degrees. But in April 1973 she was appointed Certification Office on the IPFW campus, and for thirty years she served the schools of education and business on both campuses. In 1976 a commendation stated of Dr. Gibbons, “It is a pleasure to observe the order and fairness of counsel she has brought to the certification office. Students and colleagues trust the validity of her advice and direction in program planning. Her influence in this aspect of her assignment not only extends to constituents in the Northeast regions but also throughout the State.”

Dr. Gibbons taught “Introduction to Teaching and Business,” “Secondary Schools Curriculum” and “Business Communication” at IPFW, and was actively involved in campus governance. For example, during the 1980-81 academic year Helen served on the Senate and in the Chancellor’s Cabinet, and chaired the Honors Program, the Economic Advisory Committee, and the Educational Policies Subcommittee. Between her hire in 1972 and her retirement, Helen also served on the University Faculty Council and the IPFW Senate agenda and nominating committees, and on the Joint Library Committee, the Committee on University Administration, the Faculty Board of Review, the Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Bulletin Committee, the Professional Practices Program committee, the Division of Education Waiver Committee, and the Administrative Structure Task Force. Dr. Gibbons left the IPFW Division of Education in 1981 and joined the IPFW Division of Business. She was a lifetime member of the Indiana University Alumni Association, the IU Foundation President’s Circle, the IU 1820 Society, and the Women in Philanthropy Women’s Colloquium Steering Committee.

In 1980 IPFW Chancellor Joseph Guisti appointed Dr. Gibbons Chairperson of the Joint Commencement Committee. After her retirement, Helen told a reporter for the IPFW Alumni Magazine that her favorite IPFW memory was “successful ceremonies.”

The IPFW Alumni Magazine featured Dr. Gibbons in their June 2005 “Faculty Flashback” column. Helen said her favorite hobby was volunteering. When after her retirement in 1990 Helen moved to Bloomington she pursued this interest, volunteering especially for Habitat for Humanity, WonderLab Girls Inc., the Bloomington Hospital’s Health Access Program, and the Monroe County Public Library’s weekly book sale. She was a founding member of the St. Paul Catholic Center. In recognition of this outstanding record of service in 2004 she was the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the city of Bloomington.

IPFW Professor Emerita of Audiology and Speech Sciences Dr. Pauline Flynn recalls Helen Gibbons as someone who appreciated her colleagues and enjoyed spending both social and working
hours with them. She also gave freely of her off campus and retirement time to community organizations and projects in Fort Wayne and Bloomington. Dr. Flynn remembers that during campus vacations Dr. Gibbons frequently enjoyed driving Route 80 to visit her hometown in Pennsylvania. In a recent e-mail Dr. Flynn wrote:

Dr. Helen Gibbons was a seriously professional woman on all accounts. She approached her teaching assignments with interest and expertise and cared deeply about the success of her students. Many students benefited from her mentorship and generous scholarships [and] gifts. . . . She was a committed, caring, out-loud person who enjoyed good conversation, good books and especially truly unusual travel experiences.... She actively served her church in varied an important roles [and] thanked God for her many blessings.

Helen Gibbons was preceded in death by her parents, her aunt “Honey” Mary Elizabeth Mitchell, and her sister Mary. She is survived by three nieces, a great-niece, a great-nephew, friends and caregivers.

I request that this memorial tribute be presented in the Bloomington Faculty Council, and be entered in its minutes and archive.

M. Gail Hickey
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