



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
Lundquist College of Business

THE HELEN GERNON ACCOUNTING FACULTY ENDOWMENT FUND



THE HELEN GERON STORY

A WOMAN OF UNCOMMON FORTITUDE



Helen Geron has summited many mountains during her career. First, she earned her CPA license in 1972—a distinction she shared with only 2,000 other women in the United States at that time. Geron soldiered on, earning her MBA in the same year. While pursuing that degree, she gained exposure to teaching introductory, intermediate, and management accounting to undergraduates, and developed a passion for it. After earning her PhD in accounting at Penn State in 1978, she joined the Department of Accounting at the University of Oregon's college of business, where she became the first woman to be promoted to full professor and the first woman to be awarded a named professorship.

Beyond reaching professional heights that few women of her era could claim, Geron pushed herself to conquer personal goals as well. She climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in 2005 and the ruins of Machu Picchu recently. From mountains to marathons, Geron's motto for achieving success is "slow and steady, like the tortoise."

In the classroom, Helen taught with authority, energy, and creativity, inspiring her students to push themselves harder to be successful in their studies and in life. Geron's many admirable qualities are apparent to the hundreds of students and faculty and staff members who have had the good fortune to interact with her over the years.

About Faculty Support and Funds

The top 50 universities and business schools in the United States have enormous financial firepower available to them from large endowments. Endowed faculty positions make it possible to provide additional funding for competitive faculty salaries. We have found there is a direct connection between the size of a business school's endowment and its national ranking. Large endowments lead to better faculty members and better students, which in turn lead to higher rankings.

A Clear Need for Faculty Members

Accounting is enjoying a significant increase in student enrollment, yet no tenure-track faculty positions have been added in the past three decades. In 1983, nine faculty members served 251 undergraduates in the major. From 1983 to 2013, undergraduates have increased 35 percent to 339, yet the number of tenure-track faculty members has remained the same. Greater enrollment was addressed with non tenure-track faculty members. Continuing to fortify the accounting department with world-class, tenure-track faculty members remains a goal.

Identifying the Opportunity

Not only is accounting an already in-demand profession, it's a growing one. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projected the job outlook for accountants and auditors as increasing 13 percent between 2012 and 2022. With increased job prospects, enrollment has risen and will continue to do so, underscoring the need for high-quality accounting educators.

Great universities, public and private, achieve their greatness largely through the accomplishments of gifted faculty members. The contributions of these special people make the difference between academic programs of good quality and those that are truly excellent. Outstanding faculty members also serve as role models and as a source of inspiration for their students. It is not uncommon for influential alumni to trace the impact of higher education on their lives and careers to a single professor who "made the difference."

Further, due to ever-dwindling state support, supplemental funding for the accounting faculty is crucial to the continued success of the department and its students. Contributing to this fund in Helen Gernon's name will help attract and retain highest-caliber faculty members, thereby enriching the student experience, and further strengthening our already top-notch alumni base. Now is the time to support this initiative. The Gernon Fund will continue Helen's passion and drive to build the strongest and best accounting program in the world. Please consider supporting this key initiative today.

"Helen has had a big impact on shaping my academic career—particularly related to teaching and outreach. On the teaching front, I have incorporated several of her ideas on how to make large classes more personable and how to hold students accountable by encouraging them to take ownership. On the outreach front, I observed how Helen interacted with alumni and friends to increase support for the accounting department. She is sincere, honest, and straightforward in her interactions. I strive for the same. Helen was a master at the role of department chair. If I ever take on that role, I can only hope to be as effective as she."

LISA (BRYANT) KUTCHER

Associate Professor of Accounting, Colorado State University, and Former Assistant Professor of Accounting, University of Oregon



"Helen Gernon has a passion for life that I have never seen in any other individual. Her life overflows into others, providing encouragement to all who meet her."

ERIK PARRISH '03, MAcgt '04

CFO, Hawes Financial Group



"I have always been impressed and inspired by Helen's commitment to the University of Oregon's accounting department and its faculty, staff, and students. Her approach is direct and focused, which is appreciated, as you never are left to wonder what Helen is thinking. The development of the Accounting Circle under Helen's leadership is a wonderful example of her commitment and passion for the university and accounting department. Thank you, Helen!"

TRACE SKOPII '82

Partner, Moss Adams

"One of the most profound things I've learned from Helen is that she never doubted I could achieve great things. Helen's 'of course you can do it' attitude was contagious, and it didn't take long to believe I could accomplish more than I originally thought. Her fearlessness in what she has achieved in her career and in her life in general is truly inspiring. I am so privileged to have her as a mentor and as a friend."

MARGARET ZUBER SAVOIAN '02, MAcgt '04

Administrative Manager, Department of Accounting, University of Oregon



HELEN GERNON'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY YEAR

1965-1974

- 1968** BBA, University of Georgia

1975-1984

- 1972** MBA, Florida Atlantic University
Earned CPA license, Florida
- 1978** PhD, Pennsylvania State University
Joined Department of Accounting at UO

1985-1994

- 1982** Won the Harry R. Jacob Distinguished Teaching Award for excellence in the classroom
- 1985** Honored with the University of Oregon Ersted Distinguished Teaching Award
- 1987** Coauthored and published *Accounting: An International Perspective*, now in six languages
- 1987-1990** Served as Lundquist College academic associate dean
- 1988** Elected treasurer of the OSCP
- 1991** Appointed director of the American Accounting Association New Faculty Consortium
Completed the Avenue of the Giants Marathon (second time)
Promoted to full professor
- 1994** Named the Charles H. Lundquist Professor of Accounting

1995-2004

- 1984** Promoted to associate professor with indefinite tenure
Served as president of the Emerald Empire Chapter of the Oregon Society of Certified Public Accountants (OSCPA)
- 1989-1995** Served as director of the University of Oregon International College
- 1993-1995** Served as director of the University of Oregon International College
- 1995-1997** Served as editor of *Accounting Horizons*
- 1997** Founded the Accounting Circle
- 1997-2006** Served as Department of Accounting head
- 2004** Awarded the Lundquist College Dean's Business Advisory Council Undergraduate Teaching Award (second time)
Led fundraising effort that resulted in more than \$400,000, a record for the department

2005-2014

- 1998** Received the OSCP—American Institute of Certified Public Accountants Lifetime Achievement Educating Aspiring Accountants Award
Honored with the University of Oregon Charles E. Johnson Memorial Award
- 2000** Awarded the Lundquist Dean's Business Advisory Council Undergraduate Teaching Award
- 2001** Awarded the Harold K. Strom Lundquist College Service Award
Received the American Accounting Association Outstanding International Accounting Educator Award
- 2006** Became a reverend with the Universal Life Church and officiated her first wedding
- 2006** Announced retirement and stepped down as head of the Department of Accounting
- 2006-Present** Continued fundraising role as accounting gifts officer
- 2010** Rafted the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon
- 2012** Rode bike from Oregon to Colorado
- 2014** Climbed Machu Picchu

2005-2008 Served as associate dean for professional affairs

2005-2008 Received the Harry R. Jacobs Professional Service Award
Summited Mount Kilimanjaro

2014 Connecting with alumni, 2014

Accounting Circle, 2012

Helen on Mount Kilimanjaro, 2005

Working the crowd, 2005

Accounting Recognition Evening, 2007

Truly Exceptional

Outstanding faculty members, like leaders in all professions, are much in demand. Attracting and keeping successive generations of exceptional scholars requires resources. Please consider making a donation in honor of Helen Gernon to help University of Oregon's already strong accounting department continue on its upward trajectory.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

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