

Susan J. Stocker Hall: Kent State University dedicates building to retired dean

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ASHTABULA — Kent State Ashtabula hosted a dedication on Friday for former Dean and Chief Administrative Officer Susan J. Stocker.

The university’s main building was re-named Susan J. Stocker Hall.

“You can’t really envision Kent State Ashtabula without Sue Stocker,” said Kent State President Todd Diacon. “I was amongst those who didn’t want Sue to retire. Naming the building after her is just a great way to keep her name and Ashtabula together ... to recognize over two decades of service.”

Kent State Ashtabula Senior Program Director of Nursing and Allied Health Dr. Julie Senita worked with Stocker for many years.

“It is definitely a deserving award for our former Dean Stocker,” Senita said. “With all of the efforts that she has put towards this campus — the students and the community. If anybody is deserving of having a building named after them, especially an existing building that she has put all of efforts into over the years, it’s her.”

Stocker said that she was happy to get re-connected with friends and colleagues.

“It’s a tremendous honor,” Stocker said.

Stocker holds the distinction of being the longest serving dean in Kent State’s history, leading Kent State Ashtabula for 21 years.

Stocker retired from Kent State Ashtabula in 2022 after serving the university for more than 30 years.

One of the most noticeable projects in which she played a crucial role was the construction of Robert S. Morrison Hall, which houses the campus’s nursing and allied health programs.

“If you asked someone what do you know about the Ashtabula campus, they’ll probably say they have an excellent nursing program,” Stocker said. “I would estimate that 90 percent of the registered nurses working in those local institutions [UH and ACMC] are graduates of our programs.”

The university’s Blue and Gold Room was full for the dedication.

“She really molded this community and had such passion for this campus,” said Kent State Ashtabula Interim President Bill Ayres. “We wanted to have an event to commemorate that. We are also marking the generosity of some local donors.”

Among the highly involved donors in attendance were James and Allison Mayer.

“The impact that Dean Stocker has had on the transformation of this campus and this county and the numerous organizations that she’s been involved in ... it seemed only natural that there’d be an opportunity to recognize her forever by having her name on a campus that she transformed so well,” said James Mayer, of Ashtabula Huffman-Mayer Wealth Management Group.

The faculty and the staff at Kent State Ashtabula hold Stocker in high regard.

“Many of our current faculty were students of Sue Stocker,” Senita said. “She’s definitely somebody who helps people grow in their career. A supporter of additional education. She

was particularly fond of people who had struggles in getting through education. She was very active in retrieving scholarships.”

Stocker is an advocate for the underprivileged in the area and she said that helping those students find success has been very fulfilling.

“The thing that makes me the proudest is students who wouldn’t have been able to go to college without this place here have gone on to become nurses, computer technologists and have improved their quality of life,” Stocker said. “A lot of them have come back and thanked me. It’s great to see them in the grocery store and see how well they are doing.”

