

Alumni Pride: Lee-Held teaches lessons of tenacity, hope

by Natalie Johnson - Tuesday, August 16, 2011

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Legally blind for more than three decades, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh alumna Ginger Lee-Held '00 MS, is not your typical family and consumer education teacher.

“The lessons you learn from Mrs. Lee-Held extend far beyond how to cook and how to sew. The lessons she demonstrates are lessons of tenacity, of trial and error, of trust, of commitment, of confidence and of hope,” said Ann Schultz, former Perry Tipler Middle School principal and current Oshkosh West High School principal.

Lee-Held, who earned a master’s degree in educational leadership from UW Oshkosh, will be one of three top graduates to receive an Outstanding Young Alumni Award Oct. 21, as part of the University’s Homecoming 2011 activities.

At school, Schultz said the only reminder of Lee-Held’s disability is the presence of her guide dog, Satin.

“Mrs. Lee-Held has an uncanny ability to handle all issues in a classroom of 30 students. From hearing notes that are passed, to gum being chewed, to feeling measurements that are incorrect, to sensing frustration in the voice of a struggling child, she handles teaching with amazing talent.”

Lee-Held earned a bachelor’s degree in family and consumer education from UW-Stevens Point in 1992. She began her teaching career at Perry Tipler in Oshkosh that same year.

In addition, she is an advocate for people with disabilities. She is a board member of the National Federation of the Blind, an appointed member of the Governor’s Advisory Council for the Education of Blind and Visually Impaired Children and treasurer of the National Federation of the Blind Association of Guide Dog Users.

In 2010, Lee-Held was named the National Blind Educator of the Year by the National Federation of the Blind for her dedication to helping those with disabilities and also her professionalism as an educator.

In her own words:

Activities/ hobbies:

I enjoy reading, sewing, baking and spending time with my husband and daughter.

Volunteer work:

I do many speaking engagements on the topics of the acceptance of persons with disabilities, training of dog guides, and including students with disabilities in the classroom.

Favorite UW Oshkosh professor:

Perry Rettig

What does your UW Oshkosh education mean to you?

The time I spent at UWO created opportunities to make long lasting friendships and gain professional self-confidence and leadership skills. Since receiving my degree, I have been comfortable expressing my thoughts and opinions and strive to be a knowledgeable, fair, insightful, compassionate leader in and out of the classroom.

What advice would you give today's UW Oshkosh students?

Learning only begins with the completion of a degree. Keep an open mind and open eyes and ears to your most important resources — the people who have experienced life ahead of you.

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