

HONORARY DEGREE CITATION

Ellen Sylves Ruddock '66

D.P.S. Doctor of Public Service (doctor beneficiorum publicorum, honoris causa)

A highly decorated community and business leader, Ellen is a trailblazer with a storied career. Her outstanding achievements and contributions to small businesses and the community have been consistently recognized for their excellence. She is an avid lifelong learner, constantly striving to stay abreast of the latest trends in business leadership. She shares valuable insights with clients and community leaders who rely on her guidance and expertise. She is also a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother.

After graduating from IUP in 1966 with a bachelor's degree in business education, Ellen worked as a teacher in the Penn Hills School District along with her husband, IUP alumnus Rodney Ruddock '65, M'75. When her husband accepted an overseas military assignment, Ellen made the personal sacrifice to accompany him to Southeast Asia. She credits an extensive IUP alumni network for her ability to find employment while deployed.

Upon their return to the United States, Ellen realized her childhood dream of owning a business. She researched the industry for two years and then opened Swing Set, a children's fashion store in downtown Indiana. The year was 1975. She was the sole proprietor of a successful business and had also obtained another important title—that of mother to her two young sons, ages four and five at the time.

When the business was lost to fire in 1980, Ellen embraced a new opportunity as an advertising representative for two local radio stations. But after 10 years, she could no longer ignore her passion to be a business owner.

Drawing on the valuable skill set acquired through her previous roles, she launched Career Dynamics, a consulting business offering professional development services in areas such as time management, workplace efficiency, business leadership, productivity, and motivation, among others. For more than a decade, she grew the business to two locations to better serve the growing client base that spanned a four-county territory in western Pennsylvania. She sold the business in 2003.

The Gateways to Opportunity project with the Foundation for IUP marked the next challenge for this emerging leader and brought her back to her alma mater. The goal of the capital campaign was to raise \$34 million in support of the university. Following the successful management of the campaign, Ellen was recruited by Robert Camp of the Eberly College of Business to serve as

director of the IUP Center for Family Business. In this role, she shared her remarkable insight into business operations to mentor and assist emerging family-owned and small businesses.

As a woman in business in the early '70s, Ellen blazed a trail. In 1987, she was the first woman in Indiana County to receive the prestigious ATHENA Leadership Award. She was also the first woman to be elected to Indiana Borough Council and to be appointed to the advisory board of the PNC Bank office in downtown Indiana. In 1999, *Pennsylvania Business Central* named her to the 50 Best Women in Business list, and the following year, she was named the Franchisee of the Year by Leadership Management, Inc.

Her lifelong volunteer efforts prove to be as impressive as her career and involve things close to her heart, such as military families, church, the YMCA, community centers, and the university. Giving her time and talent, she is steadfast in her commitment to making things better. In the years 1997 and 2001, she was awarded the Civilian Medal of Distinction by the US Army. She was named Indiana County's Civic Leader of the Year in 2000 and was presented with the IUP President's Medal of Distinction in 2008.

Beyond her professional and service-related accomplishments, Ellen's personal life is equally rich and inspiring. A devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, she balances her family commitments with her professional endeavors and volunteer work, demonstrating that true success is multidimensional.

Ellen's story is a powerful reminder of the impact one person can have on a community and an industry. Her dedication to lifelong learning, coupled with her commitment to service, sets a high bar for leadership. As she continues to inspire and guide those around her, Ellen's legacy is a beacon for aspiring leaders everywhere, proving that with passion, perseverance, and purpose, extraordinary achievements are within reach.