

RowanAdvances

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Dr. Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver '62 makes third significant gift to the University

Three gifts. Three unique locations. All for the betterment of the Rowan community.

The University is celebrating its third significant gift from dedicated Glassboro State College (GSC) alumna Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver '62.

Dr. Kopenhaver has pledged a gift to support operations and outfit the home of the Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication at Rowan University. Housed in the Ric Edelman College of Communication & Creative Arts (Edelman CCCA), the center is committed to promoting gender equity and fostering advancements for women working in all fields of communication, both in academia and in industry.

On Thursday, October 14, a virtual celebration was held to honor Dr. Kopenhaver's generosity with remarks from President Ali Houshmand, Director of the Center Dr. Julie Haynes and representatives from the Ric Edelman College of Communication & Creative Arts including Dean Sanford Tweedie, 2021 Kopenhaver Fellow and professor Dr. Rui Shi, and student intern Jessica Newell '22.

A nationally known authority and researcher on the First Amendment, the collegiate and student press and women in communication, Dr. Kopenhaver found her niche in writing as an English and history major with a certificate in journalism. Currently, she is dean emeritus and professor in the School of Communication and Journalism at Florida International University (FIU). She is also the founder and executive director of the Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication at FIU, which has facilitated the creation of centers at Stephens College in Missouri and here at Rowan University.

Under the leadership of Dr. Julie Haynes, the center will work to provide students and the community with access to renowned guest speakers, mentoring, networking events, virtual workshops and more.

"We have many exciting opportunities planned for students and community members in the months ahead including more outstanding speakers, field trips and the creation of a student organization," said Dr. Haynes. "As someone who has taught and studied gender and communication for over two decades, I feel truly honored to lead this initiative at Rowan and help build upon the important work that Dr. Kopenhaver has established at Florida International University."

Dr. Kopenhaver passionately believes it is the job of educators and mentors to come together and encourage and empower the next generation of women communicators to serve as leaders and visionaries in their fields.

"It is increasingly important that the communications in this country represent our population equitably, both in the information

that is delivered and in those who deliver that information,” said Dr. Kopenhaver. “The center serves as a reminder that there is no glass ceiling to inhibit young women from fulfilling their dreams of a career in communications. I am proud to be able to work with Dean Tweedie and Dr. Haynes in moving the center forward and making it possible to provide an expanded scope of programming and support for young women.”

Preceding this extraordinary gift, in 2012, Dr. Kopenhaver established the Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver Center for Alumni Engagement, and in 2019, the Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver Career Resource Library within the Office of Career Advancement. Her generosity and commitment to her alma mater continue to enhance opportunities for Rowan’s students and alumni.

“Extending resources to alumni has always been important to me,” said Kopenhaver after announcing her second gift in 2019. “Supporting students as they achieve their dreams is what I’ve spent the last 50 years working to do and that support shouldn’t just stop after graduation. It should last a lifetime.”

“The Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication creates a space for dialogue about the role of women in communication,” added Edelman CCCA Dean Sanford Tweedie. “Its mission will further the college’s efforts to support students, provide opportunities and promote understanding of gender equity.”

A devoted suite for the center’s programs and initiatives is underway with a ribbon cutting celebration planned for late spring of 2022.

“I’ve had four heroes in my life that are women,” concluded President Ali Houshmand. “Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, Margaret Thatcher and my mother. This center will train our young scholars to be the new leaders and heroes of tomorrow.”