

BARBARA HUBBARD '70, honorary doctorate '07
James F. Cole Memorial Award for Service

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“If something goes wrong, work like heck to make it right. Your word has to be good. Rectify your weaknesses. That’s how you learn.”

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Luck brought Barbara Hubbard to Las Cruces. In 1954, with a new master’s degree in biology from George Peabody College, Barbara was heading west to follow up on teaching applications. Exhausted on the drive to Arizona, she overnighted here and, on a whim, called Las Cruces High School to inquire about jobs—on a Sunday. Las Cruces School District Superintendent Mayfield picked up, and that day Barbara accepted his job offer to teach biology and physical education.

Barbara was introduced to a handsome man who worked as a jobber for Mobil Oil, and married Peirce Hubbard '57 in 1959. She credits him for her success. “I couldn’t have done what I’ve done without Peirce. He was father and mother to our sons, and we rolled the dice together.”

President of the NMSU athletics booster club, Peirce was friends with legendary basketball coach Lou Henson. When Lou needed someone to run the new Pan Am Center in 1968, Barbara, an enthusiastic sports fan, got the job. Shortly after, she earned a master’s degree at NMSU.

In addition to helping students work beyond basketball season, Barbara realized live entertainment could teach them skills for career opportunities in venue management and other entertainment fields.

For the next 30 years until she “retired” in 1996 as director of special events, Barbara used Pan Am to maximize student opportunities and bring world-class entertainment to Las Cruces, starting with the Ike and Tina Turner Revue, Neil Diamond, Charley Pride, and Bob Hope—who nicknamed her “Mother Hubbard.” Once just a stop between major cities, Las Cruces became a tour destination for many major acts thanks to Barbara.

Her awards range from the Governor’s Award for Outstanding New Mexico Women (1996) to an NMSU honorary doctorate (2007) to *Billboard’s* Golden Circle Award (2015) to being voted Homecoming Queen at Henderson State Teachers College (1946). But more important than trophies or titles are the students at NMSU. “I care about what they want in this life.”

Her passion for helping students led her to form the nonprofit American Collegiate Talent Showcase (ACTS) in 1978 to create scholarships for NMSU students who want careers in entertainment. Her close relationships with the talent she brought to Pan Am have so far generated 20 ACTS endowed scholarships worth \$803,000. George Strait, Journey, Garth Brooks, Jeff Dunham, Reba McEntire, the Eagles, and Keith Urban are just some of the performers who have contributed, and a Stevie Wonder/Ray Charles/Ronnie Milsap/José

Feliciano endowment supports students with visual disabilities. She still serves as a consultant to NMSU because “staying connected enables me to raise scholarships.”

Faith has been a guiding force in her life since she was a child. “God prepared me for this road, and He’ll make sure I have the strength to do what I need to do.” Barbara’s advice to students? “Happiness will come your way, but you will have to work at it. It does not come easily, but it WILL happen if you only Believe!”