

Fundraising Award Acceptance, April 12, 2019  
National Advisory Council Meeting

This is overwhelming. I'm glad there are so many WSU administrators are here, and I'm surprised how many of you I actually know. Dr. King, President Tomkins, Provost Muma, Dean Livesay, and all the others, you are the ones I need to thank. Thank you to my Chair, Gergely Zaruba, who is finishing his first year with us, for nominating me for this. Since I started I have had, with one exception, the complete support of this university in what I'm doing. That one exception was when my students were going to put a pirate radio station on the roof of Wallace Hall, and my Chair, Roy Norris, said, "no, you're not." Except for that, I have had the continuous help and support of my department and college, the research office, travel office, purchasing, physical plant, the Foundation, and everyone else, and it's because of you I have been able to do what I have done.

I learned fundraising from the best. Tom Reddoch at Oak Ridge taught me how to talk with people, figure out what they need, and present it back to them so they would fund our work. Pete Loux, Director of the Kansas Electric Utilities Research Program and former Speaker of the Kansas House, supported me, introduced me to so many people and pushed me to do more than I would have done otherwise. My advisor, Dr. Ramakumar at Oklahoma State, who 32 years after I graduated is still my advisor and I will always be his student, found funding for me in 1984 to do renewable energy research when almost no one was interested in renewable energy. He supported me and all his graduate students, and I knew that is what I needed to do. That is why I have done this, to make sure my students were supported every semester.

My parents taught me the most important part of fundraising. At a meeting in California years ago there was someone with funding, and I could tell he was getting annoyed with another person who was pushing so hard in the meeting to get that funding. I mostly kept quiet, and after the meeting the person with funding asked me, "You can do this work, can't you?" I said, "yes, we can" and he said, "it's yours." My parents told me and taught me by example to "be nice." That's the most important part of everything.

My wife is here. My students know her as "Mrs. Nancy." She is a role model to them, especially for the women students. The few times I have gotten frustrated here she has reminded me how important my work is, and why I am here, why we are all here, for the students. Thank you, Nancy.

The students at Wichita State are a pleasure to work with. They get better every year. It is an honor to work with them. Working with them keeps me young, and they give me tremendous confidence in our future.

Thank you so much.