

## Carole Barnett

# A professor who means business

*Honoring the greatness in every student*



**H**ONORED BY HER STUDENTS, RESPECTED BY HER peers, Carole Barnett is one of those educators who changes people's lives.

"She basically takes students who aren't completely aware of all their assets or the qualities they have, and opens them up like a flower," says former student A.J. Shattuck, B.S. '99, Business Administration. "One thing I learned from her is I've only been working at half the caliber I'm capable of. She helped me realize you can leap forward and accomplish things you've never thought of. She shows you that you can do things that will make a difference in the world."

Over the years, Barnett, an assistant professor of management, has received top evaluations and hundreds of letters and e-mails from students who have emerged from her influence with higher ideals of personal excellence and—if Barnett's hit the mark—knowing how they learn what they learn. This spring, the combination of her teaching evaluations and work with faculty in curriculum development earned Barnett the 1999 Teaching Excellence Award from the Whittemore School of Business and Economics. Two weeks later, Barnett's full-time M.B.A. students surprised her at their hooding ceremony with a speech and a plaque naming her their most influential faculty member.

Associate Dean of the Whittemore School, Stephen Fink, says Barnett consistently receives the highest student evaluation scores that he's seen in his 30 years of teaching.

### *The 7 Habits of a Highly Effective Carole Barnett*

1. *Set stretch goals.*
2. *Deliver on promises.*
3. *Buy more books than you can read.*
4. *Write incessantly.*
5. *Sleep little.*
6. *Practice what you preach.*
7. *Take time to talk with people.*

"Her work in curriculum development, planning, and collaboration with other educators combined with student evaluations are all outstanding attributes," Fink says. Barnett expects the best from her students because she strives for perfection in her own life and teaching.

"I try to recognize and honor the greatness in every single student who walks into my classroom. I become committed to working with each one of them to develop an understanding of their abilities to be what they want to be. And then I give myself permission to be inordinately demanding of them," says Barnett.

She thrives on only five hours of sleep a night. The concept of "office hours" is redundant to her—she's accessible 19 hours a day for her students.

Over the past year, Barnett and a team of four M.B.A. students traveled to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to develop an in-depth business analysis—called a "case study"—of Polaris Industries, Inc., a dynamic 45-year-old small-cap company that was among the first to manufacture snowmobiles.

"Polaris is a study of business growth and transformational leadership all embedded within a larger theme of learning," says Barnett. Polaris' 57-year-old founding entrepreneur recently passed his scepter to a 37-year-old executive from a *Fortune-10* background. The new CEO sees every business challenge as a great opportunity for growth. Similarly, Barnett sees her field studies as essential fodder for classroom learning.

In 1996, Barnett and her M.B.A. students wrote another dramatic in-depth case study—of ValuJet Airlines, Inc. "She gave us the tools to pick apart the company and she showed us how to do it, but she didn't do it for us. It was very rewarding when we were done because it was a team effort. None of us could have produced what we produced as a team. She gives you the tools—she's a coach," says Shattuck.

Barnett's "coaching" approach stems from principles in her main research area: organizational learning. She gives her students daunting management problems to solve, a clear and thorough method of analysis, concrete evidence of their mastery, and a deep awareness of how they learn. As Shattuck puts it: "The difference between other classes and one with Professor Barnett is like the difference between falling

out of bed and falling out of an airplane at 30,000 feet."

— Larissa Mulkern, *University Publications*

### Education and Research

B.A., psychology, with distinction, University of Michigan, 1989  
M.A. and Ph.D., psychology (organizational), University of Michigan, 1992 and 1994

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS: individual and organizational learning; organizational change, adaptation, crisis and transformation; organizational culture; organizational theory; group dynamics and team leadership, safety and quality improvement; strategic human resource management