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11-2024

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Nicholas Gunn

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Elynda Bedney, assistant vice president of Student Financial Services at Andrews University, was recently awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Michigan Student Financial Aid Association's (MSFAA) annual conference. This accolade recognizes her decades of dedicated service to student finances, reflecting her impact on the field.

Bedney, who began her career at Andrews University in 1987, has devoted nearly 37 years to advancing student financial support. Her journey began as the student accounts supervisor, a new position at the time, and progressed through various roles, including associate director, director and eventually assistant vice president of Student Financial Services.

The MSFAA, founded in 1967, is an organization dedicated to enhancing student financial aid awareness, promoting access to postsecondary education and offering professional development opportunities for its members.

Reflecting on the award, Bedney shared her initial surprise and gratitude. "I was pretty surprised and overwhelmed, but happy," she said. "I have been working in this area for quite a few years, and I just felt privileged and honored to receive this award."

Bedney's commitment to student finances at Andrews has been marked by significant contributions and changes, including the merger of Student Accounts and Financial Aid into the unified Student Financial Services department. This integration aimed to provide a seamless, one-stop service for students, enhancing their financial management experience.

"Every day that I'm here at Student Financial Services, there is some new law, technique, or problem that comes up. That

just continues to motivate me to learn more, teach more, and mentor more," says Bedney.

Her passion for student engagement and mentorship has been a cornerstone of her career. Bedney emphasizes the importance of understanding and advocating for students from diverse backgrounds, noting, "You have to get to know your students, care about the students, be a listener for the students, and be an advocate for them."

The MSFAA Lifetime Achievement Award stands as a testament to Bedney's remarkable career and unwavering dedication to improving the financial aid landscape for students. Her legacy at Andrews University and within the financial aid community is one of excellence, compassion and leadership. Throughout her 37 years of service, Bedney's influence on Student Financial Services has inspired many staff and students, and her work has always been propelled by her unwavering faith in God.

She says, "I pray, throughout the day as students come, for God to give me a solution to students' issues. The wonderful thing about working for a Christian institution is you can pray. You can pray with your students, and you can pray with your colleagues. That's a big thing that we do here in my office. We invite God into every decision that we make. We invite God into our lives daily." ■

Nicholas Gunn is a student writer for the Office of University Communication.



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