



Gold Dome Award Recipient

Alumna Shirley Wilson McCune '50/76



Gold Dome Award recipient Shirley Ann Wilson earned an Associate of Arts degree from Centenary Junior College, a predecessor to Centenary University, in 1950. Married in 1951 to Robert James McCune, Shirley took courses toward a bachelor's degree, but after her first child was born in 1954, she became a stay-at-home mom of five children: Four sons and a daughter. As her children grew, Shirley decided to complete her college education and returned to Centenary as a day student. Through hard work and many trips to campus from her home in Montclair, NJ, she earned her bachelor's degree in May 1976.

Through the years, Shirley became involved in Centenary alumni activities, serving as treasurer of the northern New Jersey chapter and fundraising for Centenary. Later, Shirley served as president and secretary of Centenary's national alumni association. With her commitment and support of Centenary, Shirley was invited to join the Board of Trustees, serving for 21 years. Her tenure included 15 years on the executive committee—the only woman—and several terms as corporate secretary. Shirley worked closely with President Seay, and became good friends with both him and his wife, Helen. She also arranged and hosted the trustees luncheon following graduation each year, which was held to honor the commencement speaker. She retired from the board in 1990.

Highlights of Shirley's tenure on the board include witnessing her daughter, Shirley Ann, graduate from Centenary with an associate degree in 1984 and a bachelor's degree in 1986, serving on two rigorous reviews by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and serving on two presidential search committees. She also played an important role when Drew University proposed absorbing Centenary to create a satellite campus in Hackettstown. There were strong opinions on both sides of the proposal, and Shirley cast the deciding vote to forgo the offer to ensure that Centenary remained independent.

Shirley cherishes and values all of her time and experiences related to Centenary, beginning with her days as a young student until receiving tonight's Gold Dome Award. She is thankful: To Centenary for this award and honor, to her late husband and five children, and most of all, to God for the opportunity to give back to society using her talents and abilities.