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Legendary mentor for minority students at University of Michigan retiring after 42 years



BY: Tara Edwards
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A woman who served as a mentor to minority students at the University of Michigan for more then 40 years in retiring.

VIDEO BY WXYZ

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ANN ARBOR, Mich. (WXYZ) - A video posted on YouTube sums up the impact one woman had for too many college students to count.

Mary Stewart has been working as a events and services manager at the Student Union at the University of Michigan for 42 years and now she is retiring.

For decades she was also moonlighting as a mentor for minority students - talking about academic and financial challenges and where to get the right resources. Her famous wall of memories is filled with successful faces.

Many of the students on the wall have gone on to have successful careers in sports, medicine, business, and journalism, but they once sat in her well known chair to talk about anything and everything.

“I’m extremely proud of them. I am, I really am,” said Mary.

Some familiar faces that can be seen on her wall: Derek Jeter, Denard Robinson, and Devin Gardner.

This week, she will take down all of her pictures and prepare for the next chapter in her life. Copies of the photos will go to a museum on campus, but the memories will be with her forever.

It was bittersweet for Mary as she flipped through the photos and cards sent to her over the years. She stopped and stared at a picture of U of M football star

Mike Hart at the Delta Ball, a sorority function.

“Mike Hart picked me up with Jamar and we went to the Delta Ball together. It was so much fun. I thought I was 21-years-old again,” said Mary.

As she leaves the university, a new scholarship will be named after her to help black students.

“How many people can say they are having a scholarship named after them and it’s going to be a scholarship for black students on campus?” asks Mary. "I know better than anyone how much that’s needed.”

What will it feel like to close her doors one last time?

“I’m not going to,” said Mary with tears in her eyes.

Mary will take time to enjoy her retirement with family and friends and will also mentor high school students.

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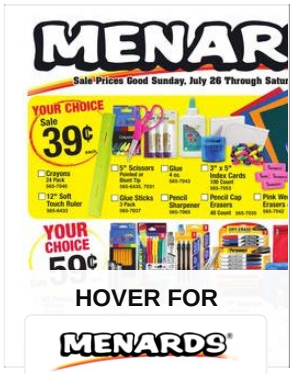

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