

Patricia H. Draves

You know, as I look back on these two years, you know, I have always strived to make a difference in people's lives. I wanted to do that here, and I feel like this community wants that as well. I'm able to do that. I also have learned a lot about myself, and how I can serve, how I can best serve. So, what am I good at? What do I need to work on?

This community has been there right along the way to support and help and help me grow as a lifelong student like all of our students here.

The first year, I really wanted to focus on learning Graceland and getting to know people and Alumni. But for Graceland to be successful, higher education has to be successful – that the towns of Lamoni, Independence and Kansas City have to be successful. I need to advocate for opportunities for our students. So, Iowa Independent Colleges and Universities, I'm serving on their executive board.

I've made sure that I've gotten to know the governor, so we can advocate for scholarship funds and for students as well. And then there's some coordinating boards that help with approval and support of academic programs.

I've gotten to know the regions in Iowa extremely well and spent some time there. But that's all to kind of help Graceland,

and mostly to help students to advocate for different types of funding sources for them.

I will say, that was one of our surprises – how fast we felt at home here. How fast we felt like people just treated us like we've always been here. I mean, there was probably just a month or two we were here, we were like, we felt like we've lived here forever. We love the people of the Midwest, I mean, and the values of Iowa, Missouri and the Midwest. We also love the diversity of the students that we have, the faculty and the staff to kind of blend the Graceland culture – the Iowa Midwest culture with other cultures. I have really enjoyed that.

The responsibility of the education of thousands of students is a big responsibility, one I take extremely seriously. So, you know, it's a serious job. But I have always, since I was a classroom professor, adopted the “work hard, but have fun doing it” attitude. I think we are living that at Graceland today, and I know with the people that I work with closely, that we can work on some serious things. But not take ourselves too seriously – what they think's important in life.

It's funny. I had a student ask me last year, “How old were you when you decided to be president of a college?” I think the student was expecting me to say something like, “Six years old,” but I said, “About a year before I applied to Graceland,” or “Before I came to Graceland.” So, you know, you think about opportunities, and fit is extremely important to me. Being passionate and living your own mission along with the

institutional mission I think is a critical success of both. You know, the person, in this case me, and Graceland. And that, I'm happy to say, we feel like it's a great fit, Jeff and I.

Hello, I'm Pat Draves, and I'm the president from Graceland University. Please make a gift on Tuesday, March 5, during our Grateful for Graceland Day of Giving. You can also watch our T.V. webcast live from the MSC on Stretch Network and Facebook. I'm Grateful for Graceland. Are you?