

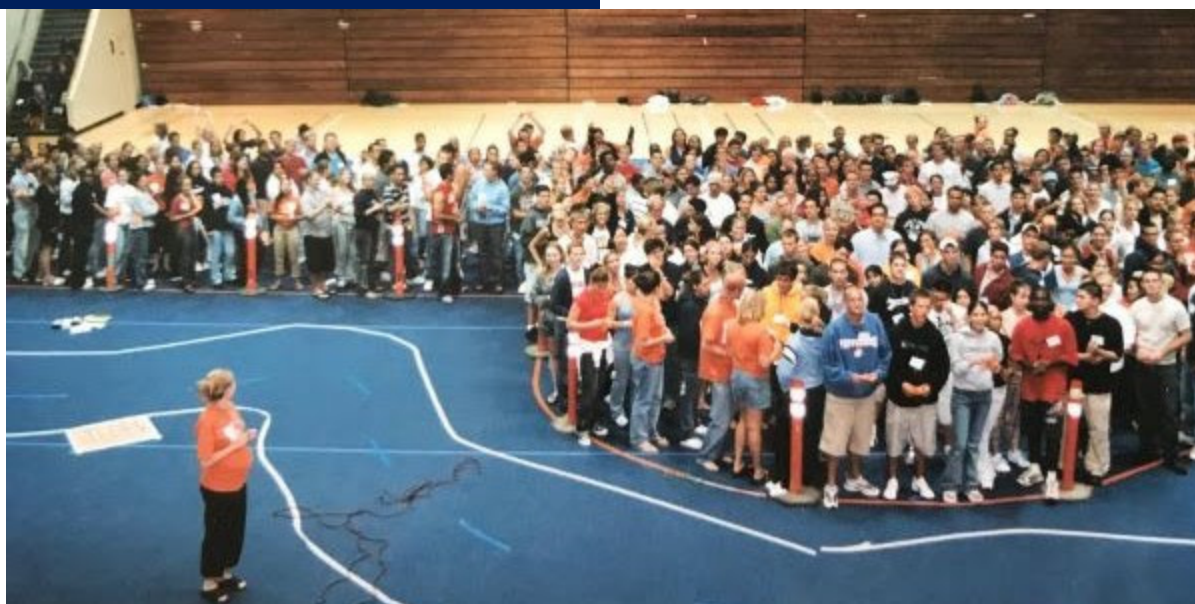


A Special Mother's Day Message from Sharon Beard

Pepperdine Human Resources



Human Resources



Sharon Beard in 2002 directing New Student Orientation (eight months pregnant with her son, Parker).

My career at Pepperdine almost ended before it truly began. After five years of service, and about the time I prepared to welcome our first child, Parker, I couldn't envision continuing my time at the University. The prospect of balancing what I believed was my highest calling from God with the demands of my Pepperdine vocation seemed insurmountable.

Spoiler alert: I'm still here, forever indebted to this community and to Mark Davis' vision. Mark, who served as dean of students and my supervisor for 19 years, crafted a position for me that was part-time and included remote work—remarkably progressive 23 years ago. His perseverance, creativity, and investment in a young mother's potential changed my trajectory. Mark consistently championed women in leadership at Pepperdine and became, for me, both a Christian mentor and a living example of faith integrated into daily work.

What I couldn't have known then was that saying "yes" to that position would enrich my life in countless ways, including making me a better mother. These invaluable lessons didn't come from formal HR workshops on parenting or work-life balance, but through countless informal conversations with all of you—those spontaneous exchanges before meetings, during campus events, and in quiet moments of connection. While you were simply sharing stories, showing photos, or voicing prayer requests about your families, I was gathering wisdom. This community's profound love for family—evident in how you care for your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and aging parents—has continuously inspired my own mothering journey.

Fast forward nearly two decades: Parker begins his first year at Pepperdine (thank you, tuition remission!), followed two years later by our daughter, Emerson. Words fail to capture the overwhelming gratitude in my mama heart knowing that countless mothers here are balancing their own family responsibilities while faithfully serving mine. You admitted, welcomed, taught, advised, encouraged, prayed for, challenged, and truly listened to my children as though they were your own. For a mother, this transcends any material gift this world could offer.

Friends, during my Pepperdine career, I've journeyed from a pregnant twenty-something to an empty nester. By the time you read this, my husband, our family, and I will likely have already shed joyful tears on Alumni Park celebrating a Seaver graduate who shares our name. I recognize with profound gratitude that I wouldn't be the mother I am today without this Pepperdine community that has shaped both me and my children.

As we celebrate Mother's Day, I offer these reflections:

1. Be like Mark Davis! The short-term flexibility you extend to working mothers may yield decades of dedicated service and loyalty.
2. Invest deeply in this community. Your work gains richness and your life receives blessings when you connect with colleagues beyond professional responsibilities. The laughter alone is worth it.
3. Offer encouragement. When you encounter a mother this week, share a word of encouragement and offer a prayer. Your support matters profoundly.

Happy Mother's Day!

Sharon Beard

Dean of Students

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).



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