

Garden Pathways

2010 "Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield"

Susan Hersberger



Susan Hersberger has a heart of excellence. Her excellence in judgment, excellence in communication, and excellence in thinking have raised the standard of the countless projects on which she has served. Because of Susan's focused and steady commitment to excellence, Bakersfield undoubtedly is a more excellent place.

Susan, public affairs director of Aera Energy, has brought untold enrichment to Bakersfield and the surrounding communities through her sustained engagement and leadership in a broad spectrum of civic affairs. She is renowned for her smart, creative approach that moves initiatives forward, "makes things happen" and "makes things work." Susan knows how to find the right people and the right words to advance causes that truly make a difference.

The ubiquitous Susan currently serves on the leadership team of Greater Bakersfield Vision 2020, as a director of the Bakersfield Museum of Art and the Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra, and on the executive advisory council of CSUB School of Business and Public Administration. She is an active member of the Rotary Club of Bakersfield.

Susan's passion to raise the educational level of the community is being realized through her championing of Aera's efforts at the preschool through high school levels. Leading by example, Susan encourages employees to share their time and expertise on campus as community readers, mentors, classroom speakers, science fair judges, and Junior Achievement volunteers. Susan helped develop the Jim Burke Education Foundation's Educational Leader's Forum and the Dream Builder student leadership program. She also has been an active participant in the "Ready to Start" reading program, a public-private partnership to prepare preschool age children to be ready to learn as they enter kindergarten.

With a history of copious community involvement, Susan liberally has given of her time through numerous community activities – serving as Chairman of the Board of the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce and as a Director of the Friends of Mercy Foundation, the Options Unlimited Women's Business Conference, the Jim Burke Education Foundation, Junior Achievement of Bakersfield, and the Private Industry Council of Employers' Training Resource. Susan is also a past Chairman of the Leadership Bakersfield Advisory Council.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Indiana University with a BA in French, Susan also holds an MA in West European Studies from Indiana University and an MBA from Northern Illinois University.

Susan and her husband Rod, Dean of the Library at CSUB, are the proud parents of Mark and Kate, both graduates of UCLA and young professionals in Southern California.