

CSUS student lounge named in honor of former University Union director

By Kimberly Horg
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Carol Burke worked at California State University, Stanislaus, for four years, but the former University Union director clearly left her mark on the campus.

Now, thanks to a group of dedicated former co-workers and students, her presence will remain at CSUS years after her unexpected death in 1999 due to a heart condition.

Students, faculty, staff, friends and family attended a dedication at Cal State Stanislaus Wednesday to celebrate the naming of the student lounge in Burke's honor.

"The room is a way for her memory to live on," said CSU Stanislaus President Marvalene Hughes. "She was at CSUS as long as it takes to earn a Bachelor's Degree, so students should ask themselves, what type of legacy can I leave in that amount of time."

Hughes said Burke "transformed" life on campus.

"Words to describe her would be 'zany,' 'Zen,' 'zest,' or any word from A to Z that has a positive connotation," Hughes said. "She was an innovator.

She took ideas and ran with them and made it into more than you could ever dream it could be. She pursued what was best for the students and wanted to pursue her vision of a place on campus where the students can go to hang out. She said to me, there is not enough engagement on campus."

Burke's husband of 14 years, David Burke, attended the dedication ceremony.

"I feel pleased that other people knew what a wonderful person my wife was," he said.

David, who is 13 years older than Carol, met his wife when she was a student at Cal Poly. They married six months after they began dating. They moved to Stanislaus County from the Los Angeles area

when Carol was hired at Cal State Stanislaus.

"She would say that working at CSUS was one of the best times in her life," Burke said.

Bryan Justin Marks, chairman of the board of directors, helped put on the event.

He said the campus received about 25 letters requesting the lounge was named in Burke's honor.

"We were still receiving the letters after the cut-off date," Marks said. "I have never seen someone described without any negative words mentioned. She was an over-achiever in every level. There will be very special things in the future because of her."

A plaque was placed on the

lounge that reads "May her work, spirit and passion live on forever."