

Hendrickses to receive honorary degrees

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Gazette Staff

BELOIT-Beloit College will honor Ken and Diane Hendricks with honorary degrees at this spring's commencement exercises.

The college's board of trustees and the faculty recently voted to confer honorary doctorates upon the husband and wife, who are also community leaders and business partners. Each will receive the honorary doctor of humane letters at the commencement on Sunday, May 13.

In making the announcement, Beloit College President John Burris said the Hendrickses have been creative leaders in Beloit for decades.

"They have reclaimed neglected properties throughout this community, renovated and restored them, and put them back into active use, creating hundreds of jobs and opportunities," Burris said in a statement. "Their devotion to the economic well-being of Beloit and the quality of life of its citizens and its institutions is well documented and worthy of this significant recognition."

In 2005 the Hendrickses' interest in independent film led to the establishment of the Beloit International Film Festival. Dedication to that program as well as to initiating the Beloit Fine Arts Incubator and establishing the American Industrial Art Gallery, and their dedication to a variety of cultural enterprises throughout the community, led to their recent recognition by the Wisconsin Foundation for the Arts and the receipt of the Governor's Award in Support of the Arts, according to a college news release.

Beloit College board Chairman James Sanger called the Hendrickses visionary leaders: "Ken and Diane have inspired confidence in this community. With the reclaiming of the Beloit Corp. property and its resurgence as the Ironworks, this community gained the ability to look at challenges as opportunities and to see a strong future for Beloit.

"The college and the city have prospered through their relationship with the Hendricks family, and we are proud to recognize them with honorary membership in the Class of 2007."

Ken Hendricks has been Beloit College trustee since 1998. He grew up in the roofing and remodeling business and in 1962 at the age of 21 started his own roofing business. It became one of the largest commercial roofing businesses in the nation.

"Along with his involvement in many business ventures, he also serves on numerous committees and boards locally with the mission of improving the quality of life through employment, opportunity, education and urban development," according to the press release.

Diane Hendricks is the executive vice-president and a director of ABC Supply and founder and chairwoman of the board of American Patriot Insurance Agency. She has worked in the insurance industry for more than 23 years and is responsible for administration and legal and insurance matters at ABC Supply.

Diane holds board positions in a range of business interests and serves on the boards of seven charitable and civic organizations. She is past chairwoman of the Stateline United Way and Stateline Community Foundation, and spends much of her free time in philanthropic activities, according to the news release.