



By Christopher Burnett | Staff Writer

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## Friends surprise K-State educator with quilt

Cheryl Polson presented with quilt.

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A group of Kansas State University alumni, colleagues and friends surprised Dr. Cheryl Polson, director of K-State's graduate program at Fort Leavenworth, with a special custom-made quilt on Nov 17.

Jeanne Boetig, a former student, organized the informal event at Eisenhower Hall. Polson moved to Colorado in September in preparation for retirement.

On Sept. 4, Denver-area evening news outlets reported a burning vehicle on Interstate 70 west of the Eisenhower Tunnel. The westbound tunnel carries the interstate under the Continental Divide in the Rocky Mountains.

"A moving van coming down from the Eisenhower Tunnel had a mechanical malfunction and burst into flames," according to a Facebook post from Lake Dillion Fire Rescue. The vehicle and all of its contents were a total loss.

The moving van was transporting all of the Polson's furniture and personal belongings to he and her husband's new home in Colorado. Among the items lost in the fire were two quilts inherited from Polson's mother. Antique furniture and other belongings were lost, as well as professional documents, complete courses and even her doctoral thesis.

"After both of her parents passed, Cheryl found a box of 1930s-era cotton flour sacks along with some fabric in a box among her mother's belongings in their attic," Boetig said. "There were also two quilts. She gave the flour sacks and fabric to me because I was a quilter. I reciprocated, using some of the fabric to repair and patch her two inherited quilts."

The group of former students presented Polson with a group hug and surprised her with the gift of a queen-size quilt made of the material from her mother's flour sacks.

"People have been simply amazing, both dear friends and complete strangers," Polson said. "I am totally surprised by this clever presentation, but not surprised by this act of generosity and kindness from these wonderful friends. Even our new neighbors in Colorado immediately gave us furniture items and other necessities for our home. Thank you all so much."

Beginning with a faculty development course in 1989, Polson expanded course offerings over the years. And, over the course of her tenure, she ultimately produced 850 graduates.

"This is home," she said. "The Fort Leavenworth community is truly special."

"Cheryl is a professor who typically would go out of her way to help students complete their master's degrees in the nine months they are on post while never sacrificing educational quality," Boetig said.



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT, FORT LEAVENWORTH LAMP

Dr. Cheryl Polson, Kansas State University Graduate School associate dean, professor and Fort Leavenworth graduate program and outreach director, looks at the personalized and signed label on a quilt that was made using her mother's flour sacks Nov. 17 at Eisenhower Hall. KSU graduate Jeanne Boetig made the 1930s ribbons-and-roses pattern quilt with sewing, cutting, ironing and monetary assistance from some of Polson's local family of friends comprised of students and colleagues. Polson's belongings were destroyed in a moving van fire earlier this year, and Boetig and other friends wanted to do something meaningful to help. Polson, who had been sorting and giving away items before moving to Colorado, had given her mother's fabric scraps to Boetig before the move. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

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