

# In Memory of Burdena Pasenelli, CLA Distinguished Alumnus and Woman of Distinction

## *In memory of Burdena "Birdie" Pasenelli*

She was the College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Alumnus and WSU Woman of Distinction in 2001. When I was promoted within the FBI in 1993, becoming the first female Associate Director, I was director of WSU's criminal justice program and received multiple excited phone calls from around the USA (Ben Menke was first to call). We, of course, selected her as outstanding alumna. I called her and she was excited to come here to accept the award.

She brought her sister with her and both wandered all over the campus reminiscing. She was happy and pleased. She also was impressed by our students. I was talking with her at the award luncheon, and at one point she leaned over and said, "I would hire them all [for the FBI.]"

We also talked about golf, which was her retirement pleasure. I remember making a joke when I introduced her, saying her name was Burdie, but better be careful when you play with her because her nickname is "birdie." She thought that was pretty funny.

On a more personal note, a couple of years later I was going to interview people at the FBI academy in Quantico and had asked her if she would write a note to introduce me. She agreed without hesitation. When I got there and talked with the head of the international section, it quickly became clear that she must have called. He knew who I was and what information I wanted, and doors opened. Hierarchy works even when you are retired. She was extremely helpful. Cougs forever.

-Dr. Otwin Marenin

