

Monday, July 13, 2009

CMU names Berman new Griffin Endowed Chair in American Government

Former state representative, Granholm special adviser first woman to serve



Maxine Berman

Years of Michigan legislative and executive branch experience will enhance the education of Central Michigan University students through the appointment of CMU's next Griffin Endowed Chair in American Government. Maxine Berman, a former state representative and current director of special projects for the Office of Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm, will serve as CMU's fourth Griffin Endowed Chair and will be the first woman to hold the position.

As chair, Berman will teach two political science seminars and organize two forums each year that address public policy and political issues throughout Michigan.

"This is a tremendous honor, and I hope that my contribution to CMU continues the fine example of the public service of Robert and Marjorie Griffin," said Berman. "Public service has been my avocation and vocation for most of my life so to be able to take that passion to the classroom is an opportunity most people never experience. I hope my students leave the course with a renewed interest in, understanding of and respect for public service and just importantly, make the decision to serve in some way."

Berman, who spent 14 years as a member of the Michigan House of Representatives, received a Bachelor of Arts in English and teacher certification from the University of Michigan. She has held teaching positions at Oak Park High School and Walsh College, along with working for the Michigan Women's Health Network and the United Cable and Tribune-United Cable Television companies. She also has extensive experience working on and running political campaigns.

As director of special projects for Gov. Granholm, Berman works to encourage regional collaboration among municipalities, counties and educational institutions. She researches and promotes issues related to women, particularly women's health, and other statewide concerns

such as affirmative action and stem cell research. She also is currently working with an advisory group to create a realignment of Michigan government.

"Maxine Berman is the ultimate public servant and a great choice for the Griffin Endowed Chair at CMU," said Gov. Granholm. "Maxine is a friend, a no-nonsense leader, and has long been a mentor to me. While Maxine has always been a brilliant teacher -- now she will be able to share her insightful, humorous lessons with a new generation of young leaders. I congratulate CMU and her future students on this terrific selection."

The Griffin Endowment honors distinguished CMU alumni Robert and Marjorie Griffin. It was established in 1999 through private donations to CMU and provides continuing support to fund the salary and associated costs of a government and public policy expert who serves as a faculty member in CMU's political science department. The Griffin program seeks to build interest and increased engagement in politics among young adults, faculty and the general citizenry.

"We are delighted to have Maxine Berman join us as the next Griffin Endowed Chair," said E. Gary Shapiro, CMU's interim executive vice president/provost. "She brings years of political experience to the position, and I am confident that she will continue the success of those who held the position before her."

Berman's three-year term as the Griffin chair will begin Aug. 17. She will continue to work in Gov. Granholm's office but will reduce her time spent in the position.