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**Teresa Spinelli named the 2018 Allard Chair in Business**

Edmonton – Dr. Wanda Costen, dean of MacEwan University’s School of Business is pleased to announce that the Italian Centre’s Teresa Spinelli has been named as the university’s 2018 Allard Chair in Business.

The Italian Centre was founded by her father Frank Spinelli in 1959, selling Italian magazines, chocolate and imported and local Italian food products.

Spinelli literally grew up at the Italian Centre, taking her first steps in the pasta aisle. By age 13 she was working in the store as a cashier, never dreaming she would one day become president of the company.

A family tragedy changed the course of her life when her brother and father died, unexpectedly leaving her at the helm of the business. “We were a traditional Italian family, so automatically, because he was the boy, he was going to take over the business,” says Spinelli.

In 2000, Spinelli stepped in as president of the company, the company had 30 employees and a net worth of 9 million. But, she believed that the Italian Centre could be more than a local grocery store. She transformed the company into a major importer and distributor, and within a year the company grew to 12 million in sales. Today, the company has four stores in Edmonton and Calgary, with 509 employees and sales of 64 million.

“My business philosophy comes from my dad,” she said. “He believed that the more you give, the more you get.” She has spent countless hours volunteering with a variety of organization including the Italian Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor’s Task Force on Sustainable Communities, and Edmonton City Manager’s Advisory Committee.

Spinelli has received many awards including being one of Canada’s Top 100 Women Entrepreneurs as ranked by Profit Magazine, the People’s Choice Businesswoman of the Year, and she received the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of her contributions to Canada.

Throughout the year she will meet with MacEwan students and share her business and entrepreneurial expertise. “For me it’s not about selling salami, it’s about the people. The reason I get up in the morning is because I want people to grow, and I want to share the experiences that I’ve faced over the years an impart how all experiences help people grow.”

Established in 1985 by MacEwan University, in partnership with the Allard Foundation, the Chair in Business is an honourary teaching position that recognizes a distinguished business and community leader.

*Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 65 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.*

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