

# Remembering Gary Krahenbuhl, former ASU dean

By Megan Neely, ASU News  
March 18, 2026

Gary Krahenbuhl, the former dean of The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, died on Feb. 16 at the age of 82.

Krahenbuhl, also the previous senior vice president and deputy provost, came to Arizona State University in 1973 as an assistant professor of physical education and retired in 2003. He served as The College's dean from 1990–2000. By then, the liberal arts and sciences had become the highest producer of undergraduate degrees throughout the university.

His leadership came at a time when ASU began to shift its focus to become a research university and expand its degree opportunities to students. One example of that was when the [Teotihuacan Research Laboratory](#) joined the Department of Anthropology — now known as the [School of Human Evolution and Social Change](#) — with the arrival of the lab's co-founder, Professor George Cowgill.

[Patrick Kenney](#), executive vice provost and professor at ASU, was an assistant and associate professor under Krahenbuhl's leadership as he worked to increase research efforts. Kenney later served as dean of The College for 10 years.

"The College was moving forward to become a major research and teaching college, and he worked diligently to transform the goals of The College's academic units," Kenney said.

Every year, The College recognizes faculty who embody the spirit of the former dean with the [Gary Krahenbuhl Difference Maker Award](#). The idea came to fruition when Krahenbuhl wanted to recognize those who were a catalyst for good when discussing the late James Mayer.

"Over the last few years that I was dean, we identified a number of people that we thought were difference makers ... and with endowment money that was raised, we ended up putting most of them on an endowed appointment. I always felt good about that and think it helped the institution," said Krahenbuhl in an interview in 2013 with the [ASU Retirees Association](#).

Some of those more recent winners have been recognized for the creation of a [health coalition for refugee women](#), establishing new programs for subjects such as [actuarial science](#) and conducting impactful research on problems associated with the [COVID-19 virus](#).

“The Gary Krahenbuhl Difference Maker Award has been awarded to a number of very talented people who capture and represent the determination, talent and spirit of its namesake,” Kenney said.

---

*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



Armstrong Hall is the home of The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which Gary Krahenbuhl led as dean for 10 years. Photo by Charlie Leight/Arizona State University

## Text image(s)



Courtesy photo