

eliminating racism empowering women

ywca news release

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2011 YWCA LIFETIME WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT ANNOUNCED April 1, 2011

Kalamazoo, MI – The YWCA of Kalamazoo announced today the 2011 YWCA Lifetime Woman of Achievement Award Recipient who will be honored at the 27th Annual YWCA Women of Achievement Award Celebration, on Thursday, May 19th, 5:15 p.m. at the Radisson Plaza Hotel, Kalamazoo Center.

Dr. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran will receive the **2011 YWCA Lifetime Woman of Achievement Award**. The YWCA Lifetime Woman of Achievement Award is given to a woman in the community who has demonstrated a lifetime of outstanding contributions to the well-being of the community, state or nation, and has a record of accomplishment, leadership and positive role modeling as a volunteer and/or in a career.

Profile of Dr. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran

Dr. Eileen B. Wilson-Oyelaran is a nationally recognized leader in higher education and serves as a role model for women and men alike. Dr. Wilson-Oyelaran has a record of professional accomplishments, including becoming, in 2005, the first woman and first African-American president of Kalamazoo College. In this position, she provides leadership for a highly selective and diverse liberal arts college.

Dr. Wilson-Oyelaran received her Bachelor of Sociology Degree from Pomona College and her Masters and PhD in Education from the Claremont Graduate University. She then went on to serve as a faculty member at Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria, North Carolina Wesleyan College, Winston-Salem State University and Salem College, one of the oldest women's colleges in the country. During the ten years she spent at Salem College, Eileen was able to contribute to ensuring an environment designed to help young women recognize and work to fulfill their potential.

Dr. Wilson-Oyelaran spent several years in Nigeria building a professional career and developing a critical appreciation of the country's culture and identity. She served as a faculty member in the departments of Education and Psychology at Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria and as a consultant for UNICEF (Nigeria) in the area of early childhood development.

Additionally, Dr. Wilson-Oyelaran has led a variety of grant funded projects including child development programs in Nigeria (funded by UNICEF and the Van Leer Foundation), and projects focused on multicultural education, leadership development, and the international student experience in small liberal arts colleges in the United States.

Eileen currently serves the Kalamazoo community as a board member for the Bronson Healthcare Group, the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, Greater Kalamazoo United Way, the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and the W.E. Upjohn Institute. Reflecting her deep commitment to early childhood education and her interest in Kalamazoo becoming "the education community," she served as chair of the Kalamazoo County Committee for Early Childhood Education, which developed a model for quality early childhood education for every 4 year old in the county. She currently chairs the F.W. and Elsie L. Heyl Science Scholarship Fund, an important local program that provides financial support for Kalamazoo area high school graduates studying science and nursing.

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In addition to her local commitments, Dr. Wilson-Oyelaran serves on several national boards. She is the vice-chair of the President's Council of the Association of Governing Boards, and serves on the board of directors of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and the Council of Independent Colleges.

In 2009, Dr. Wilson-Oyelaran was awarded the Kalamazoo Network's Glass Ceiling Award for breaking through traditional barriers and serving as a role model for all women. She has also received the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) Gender Equity Architect Award, the Salvation Army's Strong, Smart and Bold Award and the YWCA of Winston-Salem Woman of Vision Award.

The YWCA of Kalamazoo is proud to name Dr. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran as the 2011 YWCA Lifetime Woman of Achievement.

As the twenty-seventh YWCA Lifetime Woman of Achievement Award Recipient, Dr. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran joins the following distinguished women who have previously been honored with this award: Betty Lee C. Ongley, Elizabeth S. Upjohn Mason, Allene W. Dietrich, Georgia T. Dungy, N. Lorraine Beebe, Gayl Werme, Martha G. Parfet, Caroline R. Ham, Mary C. Brown, Beverly A. Moore, Jo Jacobs, Dr. Marilyn Schlack, Judy K. Maze, The Honorable Carolyn H. Williams, Anna Whitten, Ann Parfet, Suzanne Todd Shepherd, Barbara James, Eva L. Ozier, Mary Little Tyler, Judy Sarkozy, Marian G. Klein, Sister Elizabeth (Betty) Veenhuis, Marjorie Springgate, Dr. Martha B. Warfield and Patricia Coles-Chalmers.

An independent Selection Committee determined the recipients of the Lifetime Woman of Achievement Award and the Women of Achievement Awards from the numerous nominations that were received. The 2011 YWCA Women of Achievement Selection Committee consisted of the following members: Pat Coles-Chalmers, Mike Larson, Alexander Lipsey, Margaret Patton and Dave Tomko with Julie Sullivan serving as selection facilitator.

The YWCA will name the 2011 YWCA Women of Achievement, the 2011 Women of Achievement Group Award and the 2011 Young Women of Achievement shortly.

About the YWCA of Kalamazoo

The YWCA of the USA, of which the YWCA of Kalamazoo is a member Association, is the oldest, largest autonomous women's membership organization in the world. YWCA Kalamazoo is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. The YWCA of Kalamazoo, the oldest Association in Michigan, was founded in 1885 and began as a residence service provider to young women who gravitated to the city to work in its factories. Today, the YWCA provides the only shelter, crisis intervention services and an array of post crisis shelter supportive housing options specifically designed and operating for victims of domestic violence and their dependent children; the only services of our kind for adult sexual assault survivors, including medical forensic exams in a non-hospital setting, supportive volunteers and counseling; one of very few licensed and nationally accredited child care centers that both offers tuition assistance and accepts government subsidies; a unique and volunteer-intensive mentoring program for adult and teen women seeking economic self-sufficiency; and services to the community-at-large, focusing on racial justice.

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