

eliminating racism empowering women

ywca news release

YWCA of Kalamazoo Michigan
353 E. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
T: 269-345-5595
F: 269-345-8230
www.ywcakalamazoo.org

2011 YWCA WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

APRIL 8, 2011

Kalamazoo, MI – The YWCA of Kalamazoo announced today the 2011 YWCA Women of Achievement Award Recipients 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.

As previously announced, Dr. Eileen B. 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.

As the twenty-seventh YWCA Lifetime Woman of Achievement Award Recipient, Dr. Eileen B. Wilson-Oyelaran joins the following 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 Pat Coles-Chalmers.

Joining Dr. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran this year, five women in the community who have made significant contributions within specific arenas as a volunteer or in a career will be honored as this year's YWCA Women of Achievement. The honorees are:

Mary A. Doud

(Award Sponsor: Blue Cross Blue Shield)

Mary Doud's focus on improving life in Kalamazoo for newborns to senior citizens is evident through her volunteer and professional careers. As Deputy Director of the Kalamazoo Public Library, Mary oversaw the development of ONEplace@kpl a non-profit management support center, Ready to Read early childhood literacy collaboration and the Reading Together community reading program. She served as the primary grant writer and administrator securing federal, state and local funding for the Kalamazoo Public Library and working to create new services for KPL patrons including literacy efforts, outreach to home day cares, author visits and Spanish language materials. Mary serves as a board member for Senior Services, Inc. currently serving as Board Secretary and Chair of the Human Resources Committee, and received Senior Services' Helen Coover Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008. Mary has also served on the Friendship Village, Women's Education Coalition and YWCA Boards; and Kalamazoo Public Schools Even Start advisory board; and has done committee work for Leadership Kalamazoo.

Mikell Thurston Griffith

(Award Sponsor: Greenleaf Trust)

Becoming the first female student body president of her high school, Mikell Thurston Griffith set the groundwork for a future of leadership. After graduating from the University of Oregon, she continued her

-more-

education with graduate studies at the University of Michigan's Center for Japanese Studies, and was the first female recipient of the Japanese Ministry of Education Mombusho grant for two years of study at Kyoto University. Mikell, a teacher for 43 years, retiring in 2008, taught at several area schools including Kalamazoo Central High School. She is probably best known for founding and leading the Kalamazoo Central Mock Trial Team in 1986, which has gone on to win 16 State Championships in its 25-year history. Mikell also advised the Activists for Action student organization. She was instrumental in developing the Law Program in the KPS high schools and served as a consultant for design and content of the Interactive Learning Center in the Michigan Supreme Court in Lansing. In 2008, she was honored with the Wendy Joyrich Civil Liberties Educator of the Year Award from the Michigan ACLU.

Patti Huiskamp

(Award Sponsor: Kalamazoo Community Foundation)

Patti Huiskamp has contributed to the well-being of the Kalamazoo community through a wide array of volunteer experiences. Patti has volunteered for the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival for over 20 years, currently serving on its development committee; she is a member and docent at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, and is a member of the Junior League of Kalamazoo, co-founding the Festival of Trees. Patti also volunteers through the Kalamazoo Community Foundation as a member of the Brian Theile Memorial Scholarship Advisory Committee and is a former member of KCF's Women in Philanthropy Committee. Patti has also assisted Ministry with Community, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, the Kalamazoo Valley Museum and the YWCA with successful fundraising campaigns and events. She is currently serving as Director of Kids Hope at El Sol Elementary where she recruits, trains, places and supports mentors paired with at-risk children. Patti has received the Kalamazoo Rotary Red Rose Citation and was honored as Outstanding Volunteer by the National Society of Fundraising Executives.

Sylvia C. Pahl

(Award Sponsor: PNC)

As a City of Kalamazoo employee for 33 years, Sylvia Pahl, Senior Buyer, has negotiated contracts and secured better working conditions and benefits for its employees. Sylvia is a member of the Michigan Public Purchasing Officers Association and earned her Certified Professional Public Buyer designation in 1996. Her awards include Buyer of the Year for the State of Michigan, All Star Award and the City Manager's Discretionary Award. She serves as President of the Kalamazoo Municipal Employees Association. Sylvia volunteers through St. Thomas More at the Aleman Center in Hartford, collecting and distributing donations to migrant workers and the Salvadoran Scholarship Program, preparing delegates to travel to a sister parish in El Salvador and hosting students who come here. She also spends time as a committee member for the Cesar E. Chavez Committee and has been a mentor with Kids Connections. Sylvia volunteers with the Girl Scouts, Hispanic American Council, March of Dimes, Girls on the Run and Ministry with Community.

Dr. Earlie M. Washington

(Award Sponsor: Stryker)

As Dean of Western Michigan University's College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), Dr. Earlie M. Washington has made significant contributions to WMU and the Kalamazoo community. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology from Tougaloo College in Mississippi and her master's degree in social work from Ohio State University. While serving as Acting Director of the Gerontology Program at Tougaloo College, Earlie received an United Negro College Fund Faculty Development award allowing her to pursue her PhD of Social Work from the University of Chicago. During her time at WMU, Earlie has increased enrollment in the CHHS by 80%; six academic programs under her supervision have been ranked as the top 100 best graduate programs in the nation by US News and World Report; and a Center for Gerontology Education, Research and Service has been established. She has recently contributed to a published book, *Women of Color on the Rise: Leadership and Administration in Social Work Education*. Dr. Washington is a member of the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions, Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Alpha Honorary Society, Council on Social Work Education, Gerontological Society of American and the National Association of Social Workers.

The YWCA of Kalamazoo is proud to name Mary A. Doud, Mikell Thurston Griffith, Patti Huiskamp, Sylvia C. Pahl and Dr. Earlie M. Washington as 2011 YWCA Women of Achievement.

After 25 years of honoring individual women, two years ago the YWCA of Kalamazoo established the "YWCA Women's Group Achievement Award". Each year the YWCA will choose a women's group that has made enduring contributions to our community. With so many important women's groups in our community, this award will continue for many years to come. The 2011 YWCA Women's Group Achievement Award recipient is:

Kalamazoo Chapter of The Links, Inc.

Established nationally in 1946, and celebrating its 10 year anniversary in Kalamazoo, The Links, Incorporated is one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service organizations committed to enriching, sustaining and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African Americans. Beginning as the Southwest Michigan Women's Service Organization, it became a charter member of The Links on April 28, 2001 with the objective to serve members of the Kalamazoo and Battle Creek communities. The Links adopted the Youth Development model and goal statement to guide their work in the community. This high-energy group of women is committed to promoting youth development through leadership, service, art and education with a goal of assisting youth in the development of skills that will enhance their pursuit of academic achievement and the successful management of their daily lives.

The Kalamazoo Chapter of The Links collaborates with other community organizations to provide essential services for the most vulnerable families in local communities, many of whom are African American. The Links projects include: providing outreach and service to Edison Environmental Science Academy in Kalamazoo and Ann J. Kellogg School in Battle Creek; creation of the JoAhn Brown-Nash Reading Room; Leadership Academies for girls; Mother's Day Essay Contest for third through sixth graders; providing personal grooming supplies to S.A.F.E. Place in Battle Creek and the YWCA Domestic Assault Shelter in Kalamazoo; and an annual Scholarship Program aimed at students pursuing an undergraduate degree.

The YWCA of Kalamazoo is proud to name the Kalamazoo Chapter of the Links, Inc. as the 2011 YWCA Women's Group Achievement Award winners.

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, YWCA Lifetime Woman of Achievement; Mike Larson, President and CEO of Greater Kalamazoo United Way; The Honorable Alexander Lipsey; Margaret Patton, Community Relations Specialist at Borgess Health; and Dave Tomko, Regional President of PNC; with Julie Sullivan, YWCA Board Member serving as selection facilitator.

The YWCA will be announcing the 2011 YWCA Young Women of Achievement Award recipients at a later date.

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.

###

Contact Information

Jennifer A. Shoub
T: 269-345-5595
jashoub@ywcakalamazoo.org