

Thursday, December 3, 2009

Essence editor Susan Taylor to be Keeper of the Dream speaker

Magazine publishing legend, Susan L. Taylor, editor emeritus of Essence magazine, will be the keynote speaker at the 18th annual Keeper of the Dream Scholarship Award celebration, presented on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 18, at Oakland University.

Taylor, for nearly three decades, was the driving force behind Essence magazine – as its fashion and beauty editor, editor-in-chief and editorial director. She also is renowned for her contributions to the forward movement of the African American community.

"Ms. Taylor's significant achievements make her an inspiration and a dynamic role model for the students receiving the Keeper of the Dream award," said Omar Brown-El, director of the Center for Multicultural Initiatives, which hosts the event. "She began her career at Essence as a single mother working part-time. Through hard work, creativity and perseverance she eventually became vice-president of the magazine's publisher, Essence Communications, proving that if you set your mind on a dream, you can accomplish it."

Taylor was the first and only African American Woman to be recognized by the Magazine Publishers of America with the Henry Johnson Fisher Award — the industry's highest honor —and the first to be inducted into the American Society of Magazine Editors Hall of Fame. She is the recipient of the NAACP President's Award for visionary leadership and has honorary degrees from more than a dozen colleges and universities.

A much sought-after speaker, Taylor is an avid supporter of a host of organizations dedicated to moving the African American community forward, including the National Cares Mentoring Movement, which she founded in 2006 as Essence Cares. The goals of the Cares Movement are to increase high school graduation rates among African American students, end the violence in African American communities and the over-incarceration of the young.

"Not on our watch," Taylor said. "Our children are the mothers and fathers of our tomorrows, and their future is in our hands. Creating safe, top-tier schools in every underserved community in this nation is the mandate — and it's doable."

Taylor also is a cofounder of Future PAC, the first national political action committee devoted to providing a network of support and sources of funding for progressive African American women seeking federal and state-level political offices. She is co-chair with Danny Glover of Shared Interest, a capital campaign to raise money to build housing in the rural areas of South Africa, and serves on the boards of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. She has worked to help restore the lives of people in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region who were devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

In addition, Taylor is the author of "In the Spirit: The Inspirational Writings of Susan L. Taylor;" "Lessons in Living;" "Confirmation: The Spiritual Wisdom That Has Shaped Our Lives," which she coauthored with her husband, Khephra Burns; and her most recent, "All About Love, Favorite Selections from In the Spirit on Living Fearlessly." Taylor will be available for a book signing following the event.

Each year, the Keeper of the Dream Scholarship Award pays tribute to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for his achievements on behalf of civil rights. The student scholarships honor undergraduate students who have contributed to his legacy of interracial understanding and good will. Established in January 1993, the Keeper of the Dream provides scholarships ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000 for students who have demonstrated strong citizenship, scholarship and leadership in breaking down cultural stereotypes and promoting interracial understanding.

For more information about the Keeper of the Dream event, please call the Center for Multicultural Initiatives at (248) 370-4404 or visit oakland.edu/kod.



Magazine publishing legend Taylor will speak at OU's Keeper of the Dream event.

SUMMARY

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