Leading the way
Women’s Conference to celebrate trailblazers

Erica Landreneau
ericalandreneau@gmail.com

The Office for Campus Diversity will host an homage to trailblazing women in labor and business at its 10th annual Women’s Conference March 22 from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. in the Student Union’s Atchafalaya Ballroom.

“The conference is really an empowering day,” said Taniecea Mallery, Ph.D., chairwoman of the conference’s planning committee. Mallery is also of equity, diversity and community engagement for the campus diversity. “It celebrates women’s achievements. It also provides an opportunity for people to attend and to network with other professionals and really to gain some insight on how to navigate being a woman in business or academia or as a student who is aspiring to be a career woman.”

Conference speakers include Dima Ghawi, a talent development manager for IBM, and Alyssa Carson, a 15-year-old astronaut-in-training. Ghawi has spoken at events such as TEDxLSU and Global Women Leaders Conference; Carson, who is the first person to complete all NASA space camps worldwide, has spoken at a TEDx talk in Kalamata, Greece.

Mallery said men are welcome to come to the conference as well. According to Mallery, men will “typically” come to the conference during the lunch and keynote, and some deans and university administration will attend.

“The role of men in women’s empowerment is very important,” said Mallery. “I think men can serve quite a big role in women’s empowerment.”

Mallery said an example she likes to share is when trying to reach out for Carson to speak at the conference, she received a response from Carson’s father. He manages Carson’s affairs because she is still in high school.

“Hearing his story about how he supported her and really encouraged her to pursue her dreams, that was really inspirational,” said Mallery. “I think that really captures the role of men in supporting our lives in women’s empowerment and helping to level the playing field.”

She said the conference will be “a very diverse day” complete with multiple breakout sessions, which allows conference-goers to choose the panel they find most compelling.

Mallery said the conference is also host to networking opportunities and an exhibitor’s session, where businesses and organizations in the community that are “committed to women’s issues” may interact with guests.

Students Krithika Senthil, D’Anea Deville and Kimberly Hurst are organizing the women’s conference as part of a grade for their hospitality class. Senthil and Deville are seniors in business management. Hurst is a senior in general studies.

“To have a conference here at UL is really awesome,” said Senthil. “On top of it, being focused toward women and highlighting their achievements is really great.”

Senthil said she thinks seeing professors and speakers like Carson will motivate students to go to the conference. Senthil said more non-students registered for the conference than students because the conference interferes with students’ class times.

Senthil, Deville and Hurst said participating in organizing this conference is beneficial to their majors and helps them gain experience in their fields of study.

“There’s sort of a growing attention to women’s issues,” said Mallery. “There’s always — I think, on this campus — been a sensitivity to the unique needs of women and recognizing that highlighting those needs and addressing those needs are important.”

Admission is $60 for general registration, $25 for student registration and $25 for lunch registration. Anyone with questions about the conference can contact the Office for Campus Diversity.

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Levy Lecture speaker will explore famous poet’s work

Heidi Thevis
heidielizabeththevis@gmail.com

A renowned professor, internationally recognized as an authority on modern and contemporary poetry, will speak at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette’s Flora Levy Lecture Series on March 16.

George Lensing, Ph.D., a professor emeritus from the University of North Carolina, is giving his lecture, “Transcendence in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens,” in Oliver Hall 112 at 7 p.m.

“Lensing argues that Stevens’s life constitutes a brilliant union of vocation and avocation,” said Maurice DuQuesnay, Ph.D., director of the Flora Plonsky Levy Lecture Series.

He added Stevens is considered to be the greatest American poet of the 20th century.

Joan Stear, an English professor at UL Lafayette, said Lensing will discuss “Credences in Summer,” one of Stevens’ later poems, as an assimilation of mystical theology.

The Flora Levy Lecture Series was founded by the late Flora Plonsky Levy. DuQuesnay, said the lectures have one purpose: to invite thinkers, novelists, poets,