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EIU Invites Public to Meet Women of History

Feb-24-2004

Nine influential women of history will share their life stories as Eastern Illinois University once again gears up for Women's History and Awareness Month -- a celebration of women, their contributions and accomplishments.

Admission to the Living History performance, which begins at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 29, at the Greenwood School on Eastern's campus, is free and open to the public. A Girl Scout cookie reception will follow the performance.

"This is a great experience for EIU students to bring to life both well-known and lesser-known women in history," said Gail Mason, program coordinator. "Elementary students have a rare opportunity to interact with these important individuals."

The program, now in its 16th year, offers Eastern students the opportunity to portray successful women - past and present - in area elementary schools and before various other groups throughout the month. More than 120 individual performances are scheduled to take place during March, Mason added.

The Feb. 29 performance - a "dress rehearsal" - allows the general public the opportunity to view each participating student's presentation and to learn from them, as well.

Featured in this year's Living History program are:

Abigail Adams, as portrayed by Katie Gillen, a sophomore art major from Lincoln. Abigail Adams, known for her letters and opinions of society, was the wife of John Adams, second president of the United States, and mother of John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the U.S.

Nellie Bly, as portrayed by Krissy Dalton, a freshman English major from Chester. Born in 1864, Nellie Bly was a journalist who became known for her travel around the world in 72 days and reporting on her adventures in her journal.

Margaret Wise Brown, as portrayed by Calista Cahill, a senior speech communication major from Lincoln. Margaret Wise Brown wrote more than 100 children's books, including the best seller, "Good Night Moon."

Molly Brown, as portrayed by Jennifer Keck, a senior elementary education major from Louisville. Molly Brown, most widely known as a Titanic survivor, is also remembered as a woman who was determined to break the rules of "high society."

Jacqueline Cochran, as portrayed by Michelle Brubaker, a junior physics/pre-engineering major from Rockton. Jacqueline Cochran, a World War II aviatrix who broke many flight records, co-founded the organization known as Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP).

Elizabeth I, as portrayed by Stacey Knight-Davis, a graduate student in technology from Oakland. Queen Elizabeth I, daughter of King Henry VIII, brought England into an era of peace and security.

Billie Jean King, as portrayed by Megan Garrity, a sophomore communication disorders major from Batavia. Tennis player Billie Jean King beat Bobby Riggs in 1973 in the famous "War of the Sexes" tennis meet. Her athletic success helped stimulate interest in women's sports.

Jenny Scott, as portrayed by Korah Winn, a junior elementary education major from Camargo. Starting from Illinois, Jenny Scott traveled the Oregon Trail in the 1800s, settled in Oregon and became a newspaper publisher.

Madam C.J. Walker, as portrayed by Jami Arceneaux, a freshman journalism major from Evanston. Madam C.J. Walker, the first woman in her family to be born free following the abolition of slavery, went on to become the first woman in the U.S. to earn \$1 million. She did so by selling hair products for African-Americans.

The program is being co-sponsored by EIU's Women's Studies Program and the Coles County Historical Society.