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February 23, 1999

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU INVITES PUBLIC TO MEET WOMEN OF HISTORY

CHARLESTON -- Four influential women in history will share their life stories this weekend as Eastern Illinois University gears up for Women's History and Awareness Month, a four-week celebration of women, their contributions and accomplishments.

Admission to the Living History performance, which begins at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, in the Coleman Hall auditorium, is free and open to the general public.

"If you ask anyone to name 10 famous women, they'd be hard-pressed to get past Florence Nightingale, Betsy Ross and Helen Keller," said Jan Marquardt-Cherry, director of Eastern's Living History Program. "Our intention is to broaden minds and introduce people to characters they may never have heard of before."

The program, now in its 11th year, offers Eastern students the opportunity to portray successful women -- past and present -- in area elementary schools throughout the month. Sunday's performance -- a "dress rehearsal" -- allows the general public the opportunity to view each student's presentation and to learn from them, as well.

The women also will perform at this year's Women's History and Awareness Month awards ceremony, scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. Monday, March 29, at the Table Arts Center on Eastern's campus. Community members are invited to attend this free event, which will feature music by Eastern's Women's Choir and flute ensemble.

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Featured in this year's Living History program are:

Anne Frank as portrayed by **Amanda Barron, a sophomore social science education major from Charleston.** Anne Frank (born June 12, 1929) and other members of her Jewish family were forced into hiding when the Nazis took over their homeland -- the Netherlands. On July 9, 1942, they took shelter with four other Jews in the backroom office/warehouse (secret annex) of her father's business. One month earlier, Anne had received a diary for her 13th birthday; this diary, named Kitty, was Anne's friend and confidant during the two years she spent living in the secret annex. Eventually the Frank family was discovered and transported to a concentration camp in Auschwitz, Poland, where Anne died of typhus one month before the camp's liberation by Russian troops. Her father, Otto, was the sole survivor of the family and published his daughter's diary in 1947.

Joni Mitchell as portrayed by **Megan Spicer, a senior speech communication major from Barrington.** Canadian singer, songwriter, musician, poet and painter Joni Mitchell's output of 20 albums in 30 years is widely regarded as one of the most significant collections of work by any artist of her generation. Though always surrounded by controversy in both personal and professional aspects of her life, she has triumphed over hard times and this is reflected in her work. She uses her strong will and strong voice to raise awareness of many social and environmental issues.

Myra Bradwell as portrayed by **Molly Stewardson, a senior English major from Shelbyville.** Myra Bradwell (1831-1894) moved to Shaumburg, Ill., from Vermont at the age of 12. She decided to become a lawyer after working in her husband's (James Bradwell) law office, and her interest in the law led her to establish the Chicago *Legal News* in 1868. Bradwell passed her bar examination, but initially was denied certification by the Illinois Supreme Court because she was a married woman. According to the law, married women could not make binding contracts, except through their husbands. She continued to study the law and, in 1890, the Illinois Supreme Court voluntarily granted her a license to practice law. In 1892, she was admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, but was unable to do so, having become terminally ill with cancer by that

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time.

Kitty O'Neil as portrayed by **Ellen Eardley, a senior English major from Belleville.** Kitty O'Neil was swept down the aisle of a ditched jetliner by a torrent of freezing water in the film, *Airport '77*. She took a fall as Lynda Carter's *Wonder Woman*, off a hotel roof -- 127 feet straight down. In the 1970's, she performed Hollywood stunts never before attempted by a woman. As a professional racer, she also was known as the fastest woman on earth, holding records for speed in both water skiing and on land. She overcame several handicaps in her life, including a near fatal bout with spinal meningitis. "I guess I like danger and thrills," she once said. "But mostly I want always to have a goal, some dream that I can try for."

Women's History and Awareness Month is being sponsored by Eastern's Women's Advocacy Council.