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March 15, 2000

For Immediate Release:

WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS TO BE PRESENTED TO THREE COUNTY RESIDENTS

CHARLESTON -- Awards will be presented to three Coles County residents next week as Eastern Illinois University brings its month-long celebration of women to a close.

Women's History and Awareness Month activities will conclude with an awards reception, scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. Sunday, March 26, at the Tarble Arts Center, located on the university campus. Admission is free and open to the public.

Eastern's Women's Advocacy Council plans to award Women of Achievement Awards to Gail Mason, Nancy Owen and Cortney McDermott for their contributions to the community and/or university.

Gail Mason, a professor in the speech communications department at Eastern, is a role model in her profession, to the university and to the community. She is widely known at Eastern as the first chair of the Women's Studies Minor, and has been recognized for many contributions to women's issues at both a local and national level. She is active in the community through the Coles County League of Women Voters, as a board member for the Charleston Community Day Care and as an assistant Brownie leader. She is dedicated to her family, students and colleagues, and to her community.

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WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT

Nancy Owen has made a huge contribution to the community as the first female state's attorney in Coles County. In addition to her career in law, she has been devoted to community service, serving on many boards including the EIU Foundation Board, Alumni Board of St. Mary of the Woods, president of the board for United Way, "Friends of Peterson House," "Friends of the Mattoon Library," Coles County Historical Society and countless other community activities.

Cortney McDermott is an EIU honors student majoring in political science and who is already a role model worthy of emulation. She has been active in student government and in her sorority. Currently, she serves as student vice president for academic affairs. This year she has started almost single-handedly an ambitious program of providing free newspapers to students on campus. She sets an admirable example as a student leader.

In addition to the Women of Achievement Awards, the Women's Advocacy Council also will present its 14th annual Writing Award for a student essay incorporating a feminist perspective. The first-place winner of the contest is Kim Hunter for her essay, "The Role of Abolition in the Women's Movement." Hunter is a senior English major from Charleston.

Honorable mention will be given to Kari Palishen for her essay, "Ecofeminism." Palishen is a senior sociology major from Hanna City.

The evening's entertainment will include a performance by Eastern's Chamber Singers, directed by Mark Humphrey. Living History participants who performed in local schools throughout the month of March also will be introduced.