



Gavilan College Career/Transfer Coordinator receives Phenomenal Women Award

Jacquelyn Richburg was one of 50 women honored for community service at the inaugural Still I Rise ceremony in San Jose in mid-October.

Still I Rise and the 2016 Phenomenal Women's Award luncheon honored women whose community contributions were made in the face of challenges and adversity. Inspired by the Maya Angelou poem of the same name, the event was sponsored by **Building Peaceful Families, County of Santa Clara Office of Women's Policy.**



Richburg, who coordinates the **Gavilan College Career/Transfer Center**, was recognized for her years of community service in Gilroy, San Jose and Palo Alto. She has raised money for four-year schools, aided a program assisting migrant worker families, and provided food, toys and books to families to make the holiday season festive. At the San Jose African American Center, formerly a fire station, she worked to bring food, clothing, blankets and supplies to homeless people.

Each nominee had a personal story about rising above conflict. Richburg's journey began in Albany, Georgia during the Civil Rights era. Her parents - mother a teacher, father in the military - attended mass meetings sponsored by Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Mt. Baptist Zion Church. When Richburg reached high school age, she was given the choice to integrate at the white high school.

"We were smart, and we wanted the better books available at the white school," she said. The first small group of older students led the way, and Richburg changed schools and took a bus across town beginning her sophomore year. "We didn't break the ceiling, but we chipped away at it." The students were supported by their parents, the church and other community groups.

And especially each other. Richburg described the six girls who went first as her mentors. "Everybody needs a support group, someone telling them 'you can do that,'" she said. "They made it better for all of us."

"And that's why I'm here, that's been my life," said Richburg.

The Gavilan College Career/Transfer Center combines two broad student services under one roof. As coordinator since 2015, Richburg has frequent contact with four year

colleges and universities. Students are directed to resources, and gain access to more assistance as they define and realize their goals.

Recent events sponsored by the Career/Transfer Center included a visit from Vets from Berkeley, Transfer Day and Career Day on Gavilan's campus. Special programs offer field trips, and recruiters from four-year schools visit Gavilan frequently to offer workshops and advice with applications.

"The Center makes it really easy to look for all the stuff you need," said **Jaqueline Luna**, a second year student at Gavilan majoring in psychology who will graduate Spring, 2017. She is applying to CSU East Bay, Cal Poly SLO, UC Santa Cruz and UC Santa Barbara and aspires to a career in counseling and therapy, possibly earning a Ph.D.

"Everyone at the center is very helpful, especially Jacquelyn," she said. "I had a question about AP credits, would they transfer?" Luna was in the middle of her online CSU application and needed answers. Richburg called CSUMB to determine their policy and Luna was able to move forward with her application.

The center sponsored a tour of SJSU on Friday, December 9.

"Jacquelyn helped me decide which schools, where to sign up," said Perla. "She always has answers and knows all the due dates for all the colleges."

Students entering the Career/Transfer Center are often greeted by **Marques Reimann**, a student assistant since October 2015. "I like being able to help out at a place where I was already spending a lot of time." Some students are regular visitors and use the center for homework and a quiet study area. "We like to let them know, when they first come it, we have free coffee!" said Reimann.

As Richburg expands services at the Career/Transfer Center, she is reminded of her earlier work when she produced a program profiling women in the Gilroy area. She called the series "Phenomenal Women." Fast forward ten years, and Richburg has been honored as a role model and bestowed with the **Phenomenal Women's Award**.

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Media contact

Jan Bernstein Chargin, Director, Public Information
Gavilan College
5055 Santa Teresa Blvd, Gilroy, CA 95020
jbchargin@gavilan.edu
(408) 848-4724