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YWCA Kudos

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The YWCA Dayton will grant a lifetime achievement award to Lynnette Heard, executive director of the president's office at the University of Dayton, and bestow one of its Women of Influence Awards on Claire Renzetti, professor of sociology.

They will be honored for their positive influences on the lives of others through their careers, as volunteers and as role models and mentors at a March 13 luncheon at the Dayton Convention Center.

Heard will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award. She has worked on diversity efforts that include helping to create a diversity and inclusion institutional model and director's position; helping to create the Bias-Related Incident Team; leading a team and presenting at the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education last year in San Francisco; and chairing UD's Diversity Lecture Series. Heard works with the University of Dayton board of trustees and the honorary degree committee and researches best practices in higher education. She also serves on the national boards of the National Association of Presidential Assistants in Higher Education and the AGB Board Professionals.

Prior to her work at UD, Heard worked as executive director for Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education, in several executive positions at Wright State University and for Montgomery County Children Services. She has been involved with the YWCA her entire life, and her parents met at its Dayton West branch.

"The YWCA was the impetus for the choices I've made in my career, spiritual and personal lives. I'm a YWCA baby," she said. Heard took swimming and ballet classes at the Y, participated in programs for teenagers and eventually chaired the YWCA's board. "The YWCA taught me so much about how women can take charge of their lives and effect change. It taught me how to embrace women of all cultures. My first lessons of inclusion and diversity were taught at the Y. Those years prepared me for life, for raising my family and for working in an environment where young people achieve and succeed."

Renzetti will receive a YWCA Dayton Woman of Influence award. Renzetti, who began teaching at UD in January 2006, taught in the sociology department at St. Joseph University in Philadelphia for 26 years and was chair of the sociology department for 10. Renzetti has spent her career researching, writing and publishing work on interpersonal violence. She founded 14 years ago a professional journal, *Violence Against Women*, that she continues to edit today. The monthly journal, which receives 250 submissions each year, is considered the highest-ranked journal in the field of interpersonal violence. In addition to the journal, Renzetti edits two book series for Oxford University Press and Northeastern University Press; serves on the boards of the Artemis Center for Alternatives to Domestic Violence, the Miami Valley School and the Dayton Art Institute; chairs the annual fundraiser for the Dayton Visual Arts Center; and is past president for the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

Renzetti said her life's work fits well with the mission of the YWCA. "The mission of the YWCA is to empower women and eliminate racism, and that's really what my goal is with my own work," Renzetti said. "Working with economically disadvantaged women, what I've found is women of color are disproportionately represented among the poor. They don't just experience economic oppression, but they experience gender oppression and racial oppression."

The award is special to Renzetti because it aligns with her work. "That's the Y's mission, to empower women and eliminate racism," she said. "To get an award from an organization whose mission really matches the objective of my own work is just such a tremendous honor."

Lynnette Heard at 937-229-4122 and Claire Renzetti at 937-229-2428.