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NEWS RELEASE

(Editor's Note: Westina Matthews Shatteen will speak at 7 p.m., Friday, May 21, at the "Kingdom Women's Fellowship Friday Night Live!" at Joshua Christian Ministries, 5800 Bigger Rd. In Centerville. She will also speak there at 10:15 a.m., Sunday, May 23, during the worship service. The Trotwood chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority will host a book signing from 4 to 5 p.m., Saturday, May 22, at Books & Co., 350 E. Stroop Rd.)

A WOMAN FULLY GROWN: WESTINA MATTHEWS PENS SECOND INSPIRATIONAL BOOK

DAYTON, Ohio — When Westina Matthews penned a short, inspirational book, *Have a Little Faith: The Faith of the Mustard Seed*, she was astounded by how her simple message of hope touched other people.

Buoyed by the response, she's published a 32-page sequel, *Have a Little Faith: For Women Fully Grown*. Like the first book, it includes a packet of mustard seeds with this verse from Matthew in the Bible printed on it: "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

This book is targeted to women of all ages who have survived and become stronger because of how they faced defining moments in their lives. Matthews shares a painful moment in July 1980 when she found herself on "the edge of depression and desperation" as her 10-year marriage faltered. As she held a loaded gun and waited for her husband to return home in the early-morning hours, she cried and prayed for God to intervene in her life.

"I was awakened at sunrise by the sound of the front door opening," she writes. "I whispered to myself, 'Thank you, Jesus.' That day I got on the plane with \$50, two suitcases and a draft of my dissertation. And I never looked back. Everything I own today, down to my pantyhose, I have acquired over these past 20 some years. A defining moment. A moment I survived only through the grace of God."

The book offers a message to women to "stand tall in the midst of trials and tribulations and to look forward, not backwards," Matthews said. "Women are so caring and so loving and so giving that we're going to sacrifice for others. When you stand in a defining moment, you ask, 'What is this for me?' Perhaps it's when we begin to hear that genuine voice within ourselves that calls us to be who we are, who we are destined to be, then we become that woman fully

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grown.”

A poem that introduces the book illustrates what Matthews calls “the special sisterhood of shared experiences.” It has resonated with women during speaking engagements across the country at churches, conferences and college campuses. “What does it feel like to be a woman, fully grown?” Matthews writes. “False starts in our 20s, shaky ground in our 30s, terra firma in our 40s, quiet strength in our 50s, serenity in our 60s, wisdom in our 70s, prophets in our 80s, goddesses in our 90s. ...We have shared and survived serious illnesses, loss of loved ones, marriages, births, grandchildren, divorces, career changes, hot flashes, broken promises, dreams unfulfilled, spiritual reawakenings and hopes renewed.”

A highly successful executive at a prominent Wall Street firm in New York who was featured in *Ebony's* “Women at the Top in Corporate America” in 2001, Matthews serves on the board of trustees at the University of Dayton, where she earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education after growing up in Yellow Springs, Ohio. She’s also a trustee at the Bank Street College of Education and is a member of the New York Women’s Forum.

The daughter of the late Rev. Wesley Smith Matthews, Matthews never turned away from her religious upbringing. “I have always had a strong faith,” said Matthews, an Episcopalian. “Under my picture in the yearbook at Yellow Springs high school, a friend wrote the scripture verse, ‘Go ye therefore and teach all nations.’ Early on, people identified within me a strong faith and a sense of service and community and giving back.”

When Matthews entered a doctoral program at the University of Chicago in 1977, her mother gave her a mustard seed enclosed in a small glass bulb. She still wears it around her neck to remind her of the power of faith.

“Our family did not have a lot of money, but my mother wanted to give me something, some expression of love, hope and faith,” Matthews recalled. “She said, ‘Remember, so long as you have the faith of a single mustard seed, all things are possible, if you only believe.’”

Matthews is encouraging others to share their personal stories, “seeds of faith,” on her Web site, www.havealittlefaith.com. Both of her books can be ordered online there for \$9.95. An audio CD of the first book, featuring songs and music by the First Presbyterian Church choir in Brooklyn, N.Y., will be available this summer. She’s considering writing a third book in the series, *Have a Little Faith: In the Midst of Relationships*.

“This has become a labor of love for me,” she said. “The response has been overwhelming. I receive notes from perfect strangers, and people are passing the books along to others. They’re comforting people during an illness, a loss, a broken relationship, a lost job. That was the intent, and it’s been very rewarding to watch that.”