

Celebration of Women Week kicks off

By Sherry P. Shephard
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Snow flurries and cold temperatures couldn't keep the dedicated women — and a few men — from attending the kickoff breakfast for the 2014 Celebration of Women Week Monday at the Shreveport Convention Center.

Sponsored by the Shreveport Mayor's Women's Commission, the YWCA of Northwest Louisiana and Louisiana Women for Progress, Celebration of Women Week recognizes the achieve-

ments of women — past and present.

The event continues today with the YWCA New Beginning Luncheon at the Petroleum Club.

Women's Commission member Roshanda Spears said the week — and month — is a celebration of women of all races, color and creed.

"It's to celebrate their achievements, their goals, things that they have done and to just show appreciation," said Spears, who noted

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The 2014 Celebration of Women Week kicked off with breakfast at the Shreveport Convention Center. HENRIETTA WILDSMITH/THE TIMES



Theresa Jacobs talks to people during the Women's Week on Monday morning at the Shreveport Convention Center. HENRIETTA WILDSMITH/THE TIMES

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women often don't get the recognition they deserve.

Keynote speaker for the breakfast was longtime political activist and former Shreveport City Council member Maxine Sarpy.

"I'm delighted to be here this morning and I'm particularly delighted because of the group that organized this event," she said. "The theme for the occasion is 'Women of Character, Courage and Commitment.'"

When pondering the theme, Sarpy said the lyrics to a certain song popped into her head: "Love and marriage, love and marriage, go together like a horse and carriage; this I tell brother, you can't have one without the other."

"To me, character, courage and commitment go together like a horse and carriage and I think you truly cannot have one without the other," Sarpy said.

"We are not born with positive character — character is developed."

However, Sarpy continued, "We are born with personality traits — some are positive and some are negative. And as my father so often said to me growing up and in the words of an old song, 'we have to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.'"

Sarpy said there are lots of great women of character, courage and commitment who have served as role models.

"To name a few, our mothers, our grandmothers, our aunts, our older sisters, our teachers, women in our churches and in the community and our neighbors around us," she said.

"Then there are those women who have made a difference nationally and internationally."

That list included Rosa Parks, Rose Kennedy, Condoleezza Rice, Lena Horne, Sally Ride and most recently, Génesis Carmona.

Sarpy said a whole movement was started the day Rosa Parks decided she was tired and

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Today

YWCA New Beginning Luncheon, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Petroleum Club of Shreveport, 416 Travis St., keynote speaker Allison A. Jones, attorney with Davidson, Jones and Summers, speaking on "The State of Women in Louisiana." Tickets: \$25.

"Total Wellness for Women," 6-7:30 p.m., Ernest's Orleans Restaurant, 1601 Spring St., Shreveport; Cost: \$20 (includes dinner), RSVP required. Ticket information, Alice Cooper, 222-1070.

Sponsored by Amerigroup Louisiana and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Sigma Rho Chapter.

Wednesday

"Starting Over Financially," 10 a.m.-noon, 605 Cotton St., featuring Ebony Mapp, of Bank On Shreveport, and Rashida Dawson, of the Shreveport Department of Community Development. Free admission. Refreshments will be served. Sponsored by the YWCA, Bank On Shreveport and the HUB Urban Ministries.

Legal Education Workshop, noon-1 p.m., Shreveport Bar Association, 625 Texas St., Shreveport. Speakers Mary Winchell, of the Malone Law

Firm; Charles Scott and Leone Fitzgerald, of the Caddo District Attorney's Office; and Michelle Perkins, of Juvenile Court. Free lunch provided. Sponsored by the Shreveport Bar Association, Caddo District Attorney's Office, and the YWCA of Northwest Louisiana.

Thursday

Cora M. Allen Luncheon and Fashion Show, 11:30 a.m., Shreveport Convention Center, 400 Caddo St. Guest speaker Melissa Flournoy; cost: \$30. Information: Call 675-5012. Sponsored by the Shreveport Mayor's Women's Commission.

Friday

"It's a Wrap Party," 5 p.m., Red River District, featuring live music, food and fun.

Saturday

Film Festival, Robinson Film Center, 617 Texas St., Shreveport. Double feature with "Girl Rising" at noon and "Inequality for ALL" at 2 p.m. Free admission. Sponsored by Louisiana Women of Progress.

"Poetry in the Park," poetic sessions for ages 11-18, noon-2 p.m.; ages 19 to adults, 3-5 p.m. Betty Virginia Park, 3901 Fairfield Ave. Refreshments provided. sponsored by Inception, A Family Affair.

refused to give up her seat on that bus in Birmingham, Ala.

"She enabled us to see a new day of equal rights for all," Sarpy said.

And then there was fashion model and beauty queen Génesis Carmona, who, Sarpy said, was one semester from graduating from college and pursuing her dream.

"(She was) a beauty queen with a coveted title of Miss Venezuela, courageous and commit-

ted to making life better for her beloved country," Sarpy said. "She was shot dead two weeks ago while demonstrating for justice."

Those women, and so many others like them, are truly women of character, courage and commitment, Sarpy said.

"We must daily strive to give our best and when we do, we can truly say that we are women of courage," she said.

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