Ruby Curry and Dr. Marcia Pfeiffer

Ruby Curry, dean of business and human development at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley was recently named the 37th annual David L. Underwood Memorial Lecture Award recipient.

David L. Underwood was known for his love of education. He was deeply concerned with the welfare of students and staff alike. His dedication went beyond office hours—and he tirelessly gave of his time and talents to further the educational mission at Florissant Valley.

Recipients of the Underwood Memorial Lecture Award demonstrate that same dedication and commitment. Chosen by a committee of peers, recipients exhibit excellence in instruction and a genuine, humanistic concern for students, faculty, staff—and all of education.

“This is one of the most memorable events in my career,” said Curry. “To be recognized by my fellow faculty and staff is a highlight I will remember over and over with gratitude.”

Curry, dean of Business and Human Development, has been with the college for the past 35 years.

She received her B.S.E. in Physical Education and Health from Central Missouri State University, Warrensburg, Mo. in 1974 and her M. S. in Education-Physical Education in 1976 from Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Ill.

Curry said that she had the opportunity to be present for all the previous Underwood winner’s lectures and never thought that she would be a part of this outstanding group.

Curry was hired in 1976 as an instructor in the Physical Education department and coach for the Women’s basketball and softball teams. Prior to ending her coaching career, she was elected by her fellow coaches as Coach of the Year in 1986. In 1993, she resigned from coaching and became the department chair of Physical Education. In 2001, she was appointed as dean of Business and Human Development.

“I thank our president Dr. Marcia Pfeiffer for her continued support over the years,” Curry added. “She has created an environment that is welcoming to ideas and initiatives that will better our students.”

In 1990 she was elected as the Women’s Region XVI Director for the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and served until 2008. She was the assistant coach of the NJCAA, Women’s All-Star Basketball team and operational staff member for the 1995 World Winter University Games in Spain.
In addition, Curry has been a sports liaison for the 1993 Olympic Sports Festival and a coordinating co-chair for basketball at the 1994 Olympic Festival games in St. Louis. Her service with USA Basketball included serving as support staff for the Olympic Festival team trials and support staff for the 1995 Olympic Festival.

In 2006 she was recognized for her leadership and contributions to the sport and was inducted into the NJCAA Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame.

In 2008 she was awarded the NJCAA Service Award. Other leadership roles have included Region VII Director for the American Association for Women in Community Colleges and a charter member of the St. Louis Chapter.

In 1992, Curry was selected to attend the AAWCC Leadership program called Leaders. From this experience she developed the Student-Athlete Academic Monitoring program which is still being used today.

As a member of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church Christian Complex, she has been recognized as “Mother of the Year”, serves as the supervisor for the Junior Usher, and teaches Sunday school.

http://fvforumflo.blogspot.com/2012/08/underwood-award-lecture.html
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Photo By Bradley J. Rayford / Forum

Dean Ruby Curry gives speech as Underwood Award recipient.
By HOLLY SHANKS of The Forum

Allieze Ruby Curry, dean of Business and Human Development stepped onto the stage and into the spotlight during the David L. Underwood lecture earlier this month. She revealed through self-reflections, the lessons learned from her 35 year career, the struggles and rewards of becoming a guardian of her nephew and her thoughts of the ever changing highway of education.

Florissant Valley Music Professor Paul Higdon performed classical piano pieces by Sergei Rachmaninov. Professor Chris Stephens introduced Curry by sharing with the audience her many encompassing accomplishments. Stephens also shared his memory of Curry being the first person to welcome him aboard as a newly hired full-time professor at FV.

Annually, Florissant Valley honors the memory of Professor David L. Underwood who joined STLCC-FV in 1963, with a lecture named in his honor. He is remembered as “flexible, caring and supportive man for both staff and students.” Underwood’s dedication and commitment is embodied in an apparent theme that reoccurred in Curry’s speech, the idea that striving for each and every student and faculty’s well-being and success is important.

Curry started her career with Florissant Valley in the fall of 1976 and has seen many changes and challenges. “Life is a moment to moment experience that can’t be scripted,” she said.

The former college field hockey standout and Professor of Physical Education, shared rewarding stories and some that had made her shed a few tears. Through it all Curry encouraged the audience to always strive for excellence in and out of the classroom.

Curry’s inspiring words resonated with the audience that filled the Terry M. Fisher Theatre.

“We must recognize cultural differences that our students and staff bring and use them as assets not problems to overcome,” she said.

Along with self-reflection and self-assessment, Curry challenged the audience to think about a few things. “What kind of campus are we making? What kind of campus should we be making and what kind of campus can we be?”

Curry left the stage the same way she stepped on to it, to a warm standing ovation of colleagues and friends.