

Struggle & Transformation

WOMEN AND GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS



KEYNOTE

Saudatu Mahdi

“I have a dream for the women in Nigeria to live a life free from discrimination, abuse, and one full with opportunities. I share a hope and trust in our collective determination that our best future will happen.”

A leading social activist and recipient of *Ms. Magazine's* “Woman of the Year Award” in 2004, Saudatu Mahdi has focused her life’s mission on advancing human rights and improving women’s lives in Nigeria and throughout the world. Trained as a teacher, Mahdi spent most of her career in senior administrative posts at secondary schools, but was forced out of her job by “geo-politics and a sexist policy.”

Since 1999, she has served as the Secretary General of the Women’s Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA). Founded in March 1999 by the Honorable Justice Fati Lami Abubakar, Nigeria’s former First Lady, WRAPA has been a leading voice in helping abused women secure legal representation when their rights have been violated.

Under Mahdi’s leadership, WRAPA has secured freedom and facilitated fair trials for scores of women incarcerated without a just cause, or those awaiting trials for unduly long periods. Most recently, Mahdi and WRAPA were instrumental in winning acquittal for Amina Lawal, an impoverished young Nigerian mother sentenced to death by stoning on charges of adultery—a case that attracted worldwide attention. Their unflinching defense efforts resulted in Lawal’s case being dismissed and the sentence overturned.

A Fellow of the Institute for Corporate Administration, Mahdi also is the recipient of the Ralph U. Stone Memorial Scholarship Award for her leadership and dedication to advocacy against the inhumane treatment of women.

Women’s Day 2006 will take a critical look at issues threatening the safety, well-being and freedom of women. Throughout the world, women suffer disproportionately as victims of oppression and injustice. Consider the following:

- Worldwide, 1.3 billion people live in absolute poverty. Seventy percent of them are women. (Source: *UN Development Fund for Women*)
- More than 565 million women in the world are illiterate. (Source: *The Fruits of Girls Education, 2001, IFPRI*)
- Worldwide, women make up more than half the population, but hold only 12.7 percent of all parliamentary seats. (Source: *Women’s Environment and Development Fund*)
- Globally, at least one in three women and girls are beaten or sexually abused in their lifetime. (Source: *UN Commission on the Status of Women*)
- Four million women and girls annually are trafficked in forced labor and sexual slavery. (Source: *United Nations*)
- Five thousand women annually are killed in so-called “honor killings.” (Source: *UN Population Fund*)
- Women make up almost half of the 37.2 million adults living with HIV/AIDS. Two million of these women give birth each year, passing AIDS to their offspring. (Source: *World Health Organization*)
- Seventy percent of the world’s 35 million refugees of war and violence are women. (Source: *United Nations*)

Taking the viewpoint that what happens to one woman happens to all women, we will view the status of women in the United States within the context of larger global conditions, and examine the root causes of violence, poverty, and oppression of women both at home and abroad. Finally, we will discuss ways feminists can work to alleviate the suffering and oppression of all women.

The conference will draw inspiration from heroic women who are working at the forefront of women’s global human rights. Our keynote speaker is international women’s rights activist and *Ms. Magazine* Woman of the Year, Saudatu Mahdi. Additionally, Women’s Day 2006 features Middle Eastern scholar Leila Farah, assistant professor of women’s studies at DePaul University, and Mary Fabri, senior director, Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture at Heartland Alliance. Come join these and other distinguished panelists and presenters in what is sure to be a thought-provoking and stimulating event.

WOMEN'S DAY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2006

Des Plaines Campus

8:30 - 9 a.m. Registration, Continental breakfast
9 - 10 a.m. Keynote Address, Saudatu Mahdi
10 - 10:25 a.m. Q & A, Saudatu Mahdi
10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Emphasis Sessions:
Laila Farah and Mary Fabri
11:35 a.m. - 12:25 p.m. Breakout Sessions
12:40 - 2:30 p.m. Lunch and entertainment

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2006

Skokie Campus

9:30 - 10 a.m. Registration, Continental breakfast
10 - 11:30 a.m. Presentation and Q & A, Saudatu
Mahdi

Women's Day is made possible by generous grants from the Board of Student Affairs and National City Bank. Leila Farah's presentation is sponsored in part by the Muslim Student Association.

REGISTRATION FORM

Registration deadline: February 24, 2006

___ **Friday, March 10** at the Des Plaines campus
Full Day: \$25 in advance (by February 24), includes lunch.
Registration at the door is \$30 (lunch subject to availability).

___ **Saturday, March 11** at the Skokie campus
Half Day: \$10 in advance (by February 24).
Registration at the door is \$15.

Cost for the programs on both days is free to Oakton students.
(Cost of lunch for students on March 10 is \$5.)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please make checks payable to Oakton Community College and mail to Oakton Community College, Student Affairs, 1600 E. Golf Rd., Des Plaines, IL 60016, Attention: Claudia Cabay.