

## Governor's Award for Outstanding New Mexico Women

### Nomination of Adrienne Dare

In nominating Adrienne Dare for the Governor's Award for Outstanding New Mexico Women, I would like to acknowledge her passion and commitment showing others the usefulness of a mathematics education in the real world. Immediately after earning her B.A. in 1964 from California's San Jose State University, Adrienne joined the Peace Corp teaching mathematics and science in Nigeria for two years.

From 1975 to 2001, Adrienne provided guidance and mentoring through her teaching positions at the University level. During this time, Adrienne recognized that one obstacle to learning mathematics was the fear of mathematics. To this end, Adrienne developed Math Anxiety workshops that were presented at regional mathematical meetings and used in her classroom teaching. By 1974 Adrienne had earned her M.S. in Computer Science from the University of Oregon and in 1985 earned her PhD. in Mathematics from New Mexico State University.

During 1974 Adrienne attended a Math/Science Network meeting of women educators interested in increasing the number of young women entering professions requiring advanced studies in mathematics and science. Discussion at these early meetings focused on the graduate dissertation of sociologist Lucy Sells pointing to early mathematics education as a "critical filter" keeping young women out of mathematics and science careers. The outcome of these discussions was to hold the Expanding Your Horizons in Science and Mathematics Conferences™ (EYH) for girls showing young women how important mathematics courses were to their futures.

For several years, Adrienne volunteered at EYH Conferences held in the Las Cruces area sponsored by the American Association of University Women (AAUW). In 1993, as President of the Grant County Branch of AAUW, Adrienne recruited Della Nanez-Acosta to assist her in planning and executing the first of 14 EYH Conferences for girls in southwest New Mexico, including Grant, Luna, Catron, and Hidalgo counties.

The primary obstacle to carrying out these conferences is resources, especially funding. Adrienne and Della found local business owners willing to donate goods and services, and they recruited more than 25 professional women willing to serve as workshop presenters and female role models. Pharmacists, doctors, dentists, airplane pilots, military officers, computer engineers were recruited from the local communities—all women who were excited to be sharing their careers with younger women. Early on, the EYH effort found a partner in Western New Mexico University, which has provided the facility for the conference since the beginning. The local school districts have joined with EYH providing transportation to the conference. In 2005, the Rio Grande Council of the Girl Scouts of America and Gila Regional Medical Center joined the effort as partners hosting EYH. The 2005 conference hosted 294 young women, more than 80% of them in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grades.

The latest research shows that most girls lose interest in mathematics and science curriculums by the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Adrienne identified this and wanted to do something about it. For 14 years, young girls in the southwestern corner of New Mexico have been able to meet professional women and spend time in a workshop session learning what mathematics and science skills are needed to succeed. New Mexico is large state with small, rural communities. Often, exposure to educational and career opportunities is limited. Perhaps the biggest impact this program has is that when the younger girls are in their teens, they want to come back to EYH as a volunteer, assisting workshop presenters in showing the next generation how important mathematics and science education is to their future.

Adrienne has never lost sight of the "critical factor" eliminating young women from mathematics and science based careers. Her years of service on the Board of Directors for New Mexico Network for Women in Science and Engineering, AAUW-NM, and her membership in the Association for Women in Mathematics and the Mathematical Association of America have helped her maintain this focus.

She has been influential in leading her local AAUW Branch in this "win – win" for Grant, Luna, Hidalgo, Catron Counties, the girls of southwestern New Mexico and the State of New Mexico.

I am honored to nominate Adrienne Dare, Professor Emeritus, Mathematics and Computer Science, Western New Mexico University for this prestigious award.