PRESS RELEASE

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Women in Media Lead Campaign for Rutgers Gloria Steinem Chair

Many of the women who themselves defied the odds to become pioneers as media leaders are now working together to raise $3.5 million for the Gloria Steinem Endowed Chair in Media, Culture, and Feminist Studies at Rutgers University.

Under the leadership of co-chairs Geraldine Laybourne, founder and former chairman and CEO, Oxygen Media, who the ‘80s and ‘90s lead the team that created Nickelodeon and Nick at Nite, and Subha Barry, general manager and vice president, Working Mother Media, and formerly managing director and global head of diversity and inclusion at Merrill Lynch, the Gloria Steinem Chair Steering Committee came together a year ago to envision the Gloria Steinem Chair as the hub of a Rutgers focus on women, media and tech. The purpose of the Steinem Chair is to address the underrepresentation of women in leadership both behind the scenes in the U.S. film, TV and digital media industries and on the screen.

“Gloria has used media to educate and inspire generations of people to challenge the status quo and bring feminist issues to the forefront of global debate. This chair is historic as the first ever to be named for her and one that brings together the issues she cares most about – women, culture and media.” said committee co-chair Gerry Laybourne.

The newest member of the Steinem Chair Committee, Fran Zone, communicator, leadership coach and creator of The Zone Method™, brings years of experience and a strong commitment to the cause.

“When friends contacted me about what the committee was doing and the ways the Steinem Chair could expand opportunities for students to succeed in today’s media arenas as well as honor Gloria’s legacy, I was eager to join in support.” Like many on the committee, Zone has a history of advocating for women’s rights. In 1992, she created The Coalition to Stop Sexual Harassment, serving as its executive director.

Martha Nelson, senior vice-president and global editor-in-chief at Yahoo, Carol Jenkins, former WNBC anchor for 23 years, and financial journalist Stacey Tisdale are committee members who broke ground for women in media. Nelson was the first woman in the company’s 90-year history to hold the role of editor-in-chief at Time Inc. Jenkins is founder of the Women’s Media Center, the nonprofit aimed at increasing coverage and participation of women in the media. Tisdale is a financial expert on NBC’s Today Show, the financial contributor for Arise TV, and is a blogger on the Huffington Post – Black Voices platform.
In addition to raising funds for the Gloria Steinem Chair, the committee is working with IWL Director Alison R. Bernstein, to create a mentoring program for young women seeking to advance in their careers. The Gloria Steinem Media Mentoring Program, funded by the Charles H. Revson Foundation, was launched in September and includes 20 mentoring pairs.