RCC Foundation honors outstanding graduate

The Rogue Community College Foundation will present its 2011 Outstanding Alumni Award to Rene McKenzie, M. Ed.

Rene will receive the award at the RCC Foundation’s 31st Annual Scholarship Awards Ceremony, set for May 26 at the Crater High School Performing Arts Center in Central Point. More than $520,000 in scholarships will be presented to over 400 students.

A 1992 Phi Theta Kappa and magna cum laude RCC graduate, McKenzie began her studies while a single mother with the support of the RCC Moving On program. In just one year, she went from student to student worker to RCC employee. While working full time and raising her daughter, McKenzie completed a two-year degree at RCC and then transferred to Northwest Christian College to complete a bachelor’s degree. McKenzie went on to OSU where she earned a Master’s in Education. She has recently completed the coursework for her Ph. D. in community college leadership and is working on her dissertation.

She was the first director of RCC’s TRiO Student Support Services and is currently the director of Student Programs. Her past awards include Woman of the Year in Oregon Community Colleges, American Association of University Women Top Scholar, and OSU College of Education Scholarship.

“Rene’s journey has been one of persistence and resolution, and she truly deserves this honor,” said Jennifer Wheatley, executive director of the RCC Foundation. “Rene embodies the ideal that anything is possible if you are committed to your goal and believe in yourself.” McKenzie’s leadership in the programs she has coordinated, which also include RCC Discovery programs Moving On and Bright Futures, are evidence of her contributions to RCC and the community, according to Wheatley.

“These programs serve students with some of the greatest challenges, including low income, drug and alcohol recovery, and home instability. Many students served through the programs are first-generation college students,” Wheatley said. “Rene provides effective and empathetic support and has directly helped change the lives of hundreds of students.”

The Outstanding Alumni Award is given annually. For more information, contact the RCC Foundation at 541-956-7327.

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