

Four Black Women Honored For Career Achievements

Four Black women employees of the U.S. Department of Labor were honored for career and personal achievements at a ceremony marking the start of week-long activities observing Federal Women's Week this week.

Recipients of the Personal Achievement Award were: Lois Barksdale, Labor-Management Services Administration; Rebecca Washington and Barbara Q. Rainey, Office of the Inspector General, and Christine W. Hemphill, Office of Information and Public Affairs. Six other department employees received the awards.

Following is a brief sketch of the Black recipient's career progression and accomplishments:

***Lois Barksdale**, special assistant to Ronald J. St. Cyr, deputy assistant secretary, Labor-Management Services Administration. The first female compliance officer hired in the LMSA Philadelphia Region, she was cited for her "unusual and outstanding career progression from GS-5 to GS-15," balancing educational pursuits, volunteer activities and success in a nontraditional employment area.

***Rebecca Washington** was cited for steady advancement through her own perseverance from clerk-typist to desk officer, while at the same time continuing to pursue higher education. She is also active in community organizations.

***Barbara Q. Rainey**, a computer specialist, began her federal career as a clerk-stenographer. A mother of four children, she has completed course requirements for a degree in business administration, served as an equal employment opportunity counselor and provides guidance to co-workers.

***Christine W. Hemphill** was cited as a "top-notch" secretary and for her superior performance and invaluable asset to the department's top public affairs officer.

Elaine Murrell, who heads the department's Federal Women's Program, said the week's activities sought to increase awareness of issues that women face, and to bring about positive changes in attitude and perceptions of women in the workforce.

In addition to the personal achievement award, the program also recognized supervisors and managers who have helped improve employment opportunities for women. This year, these Impact Awards were present to three men.

Julia Chang Bloch, keynote speaker at the opening program, said that as women progress in their careers and move into decision making positions, it is important that they "share and help other women move along in their career."

She also reminded her audience that ultimately "you yourself determine what you do with your life and what career paths you choose."

Bloch, assistant administrator for the Agency for International Development, spoke about her personal experiences as a child and 18 years in public service.

Bloch said people find strength in adversity and added that early in life she learned to overcome barriers and decided she would rather work with her brains than with her hands.

Noting that her parents placed "the highest premium on educational skills," she was also encouraged to reach out for new and challenging goals, including

those in the "nontraditional" areas, she said.

She acknowledged that during her career her mentors have been men, but that is gradually changing for the younger women entering new careers, she told the group.

But she also noted it is still a fact that

women have "to work harder and perform better than their male peers."

Bloch praised the Labor Department for its commitment to the Federal Women's Program, adding the program was one of substance, not only symbolic.

The week's activities included seminars on topics dealing with job search techni-

ques, meeting career challenges, policy issues in a changing labor market and the federal budget process.

The week's activities were coordinated by the Federal Women's Program, a part of the department's Office of Equal Employment and Affirmative Action Programs.

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