

News brief

BWA to honor students, faculty, community member

The spotlight will shine on 17 outstanding men at the Black Women of Achievement Ebony Man Showcase, "Beside Every Strong Man There is a Strong Woman," at 8 p.m. today in the EMU Fir Room.

According to BWA Director Kim Jones, the men — 14 University stu-

dents, two faculty members and one community member — are being honored for their positive contributions through conduct, character and activities.

This year's program is different from events in years past because it is strictly focused on the awards rather than auctions to raise money. Jones said this year, fundraising for groups was not as much of a focus.

During the ceremony, the men will be interviewed on stage and

they will have the opportunity to showcase their talents for the audience.

Camille Gilmore of Alpha Kappa Alpha is slated to speak on the show's theme of honoring men and women.

The dinner and event are free and open to the public. Guests are encouraged to dress semi-formal.

For more information, call BWA at 346-3735.

— Robin Weber

Contraception

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ance and contraception," she said. "The purpose of having these speakers is to get students thinking about what they will do when they need to get coverage after graduation."

Phillips gave a short speech, which included summary of contraception through the years and how it's progressed.

"Technology has not guaranteed access," she said, while discussing more recent aspects of the issue before introducing the speakers for the evening.

Diane Rosenbaum, chairwoman of the Oregon Women's Health and Wellness Alliance and the first speaker of the evening, discussed issues concerning Oregon's more recent efforts to get contraception covered by employee insurance.

"Birth control is a big out-of-pocket expense to women in Oregon," she said. "It is discriminatory not to offer it to all female employees."

Riley, the second and main speaker of the evening, served as the lead counsel in Erickson v. Bartell Drug Co., the landmark discrimination case in which, on June 12, 2001, the federal court held that an employer's exclusion of contra-

ception from its health plan is illegal sex discrimination. After a video compilation of news coverage of the decision, she explained her experience with the case. Riley said it was a challenge from the beginning.

"When I first approached insurance companies with the case and a request to include contraception in employee coverage, they said, 'You're gonna have to make us,'" she said.

A former Oregon House Representative and a strong activist for the availability of contraception on an international level, Piercy, the third speaker of the evening, said Oregon residents can act toward the same goal in a number of ways, including voting for representatives who support the issue.

In addressing the young women

of the audience, she said, "When you talk to your friends and ask, 'What difference does it make who you vote for?' I guess now you know the answer."

In the last few minutes of her speech, Riley strongly encouraged Oregon residents to partake in the Letter Campaign, a movement in which individuals write letters to their employers demanding improved insurance plans. After a copy is sent to state lawmakers, the employer cannot say, "Our women aren't asking for this," when approached with a coverage case, she said.

"Someday, I hope our sons and daughters will live in a world where every child is wanted and loved and cherished," she said.

Caron Alarab is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.



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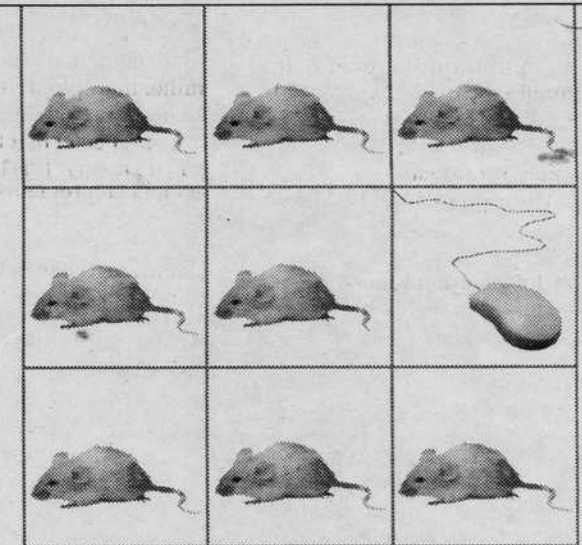
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