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| Place | School        | Lbs. per resident |
|-------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1st   | Oregon        | 27.08             |
| 2nd   | Miami         | 26.79             |
| 3rd   | Bowling Green | 23.75             |
| 4th   | OSU           | 23.01             |
| 5th   | Ohio          | 21.77             |
| 6th   | UC Davis      | 19.58             |
| 7th   | Harvard       | 18.41             |

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RHA, Campus Recycling & University Housing

# Actress shares experiences in overcoming adversity

*Aloma Wright spoke at the Black Women of Achievement luncheon*

BY MORIAH BALINGIT  
NEWS REPORTER

Aloma Wright wears many hats. On the popular hospital sitcom "Scrubs," she is Nurse Laverne Roberts. In the movie "Mr. Deeds," she was the stubborn tenant of a high-rise apartment who refused to evacuate from a fire without her seven cats. And in the film "Brothers," she played a racist mother struggling with her son's choices.

But on Saturday, she only wore two hats. As the keynote speaker for the Black Women of Achievement's "Empowerment Luncheon," she shared her experiences in overcoming the various forms of adversity she faced throughout her life.

"If you can overcome obstacles, you become a better person," she said in her address. The theme of the event was "Overcoming Adversity."

After the address, Wright put on another hat: This one was wide-brimmed and straw, with a lavender ribbon. The hat transformed her into a dissatisfied housewife for the monologue "Sunday Morning Memories," about a woman who skips church to see Josh, her young, hot adulterous accomplice.

Wright said the monologue was for entertainment value, but it nonetheless had a visible impact on the audience.

The keynote address concluded a two-hour program that drew about 30 people, including men and women, to 100 Willamette. The program also included a performance by Erin O'Brien, director of the ASUO Women's Center, and presentations on the history of powerful women of color.

University junior Brenda Sifuentez and senior Candice Coats of Mujeres, a sub-group of MEChA, spoke about Dolores Huerta, the co-founder of the United Farm Workers who managed to raise 11 children alone while working alongside Cesar Chavez to gain more rights for laborers.

"She doesn't get the recognition



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

Aloma Wright performs "Sunday Morning Memories" by Gus Edwards after her keynote speech at the Black Women of Achievement's "Empowerment Luncheon" on Saturday.

she deserves," Sifuentez said. "But she doesn't ask for it either."

O'Brien presented a short film and performance piece for the program and then spoke briefly about overcoming adversity.

"The challenge for me is that the adversity is not my identity," she said in an interview following the program. "The adversity comes from racism and sexism and homophobia."

O'Brien said that once, when she worked with high school students in Los Angeles on social justice issues, the director of the program outed her. The students were not accepting.

"They said horrible things," she said. "It was probably one of the most trying times in my life ... I thought if I were straight, I wouldn't have to deal with this."

In the end, however, she watched at least one student change face.

"I was miserable," she said. "But I came out of it and I moved somebody and that was more important."

Wright had her own stories to share about overcoming adversity. She had a child when she was 14 but still managed to graduate high school and eventually earn a degree in theater. She struggled with drugs,

depression and being a starving artist without a steady paycheck.

Fresh out of theater school in New York, she returned to Los Angeles to find there was no work.

"I had a degree in theater and there was no theater, so I turned to drugs," Wright said. She paused to compose herself. "That made me realize that we are human and we will do things that we don't think we will do ... You become a different person with drugs."

But Wright persevered, and she said she's now "just happy to be a working actress." She is currently filming a movie in Atlanta, and she will appear in 11 episodes of "Scrubs" next season.

Senior Tameka Thompson said Wright gave her confidence that she could succeed, though her education hasn't taken a traditional path.

"For most people, having a child at 14 would stop them dead in their tracks," she said. "Wright showed me there are people that succeed outside the box. That's something I'll never forget for the rest of my life."

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