



Johni Wardwell Receives “2010 Woman of Distinction” Award

Soroptimist International of Muskogee honored Johni Wardwell, as “Woman of Distinction”, at their annual banquet on Monday, March 8, at 6 pm at Cowboy’s, 401 N. York. Johni was honored for the many volunteer activities that she does in our community. Wren Stratton, health careers certifications instructor, was the guest speaker on Johni’s behalf.

Johnina (Johni) Wardwell is the daughter of the late John and Charlotte Rainbolt of Greenville, IN. She is the oldest of eight children and grew up in a small southern Indiana town near the Ohio River and Louisville KY. She has been married to Loren Wardwell for over 41 years and they have 2 children, Ahren, a recent graduate of Hendrix College in Conway, AR and Alyssa, a sophomore at Oklahoma City University.

She is a graduate of Ursuline College in Louisville KY and her Master’s degree is from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in Educational Media. Although she has lived in eleven different states and

held a variety of jobs, such as teacher, real estate salesperson and residential assessor for a municipality. She uses two phrases to describe her lifework and passion—educator and community activist. Involved in every community she has lived, she firmly believes that a citizen has a responsibility to find and address community needs. This quote from Marian Wright Edelman expresses her core belief: *“Service is the rent we pay to be living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time.”*

Her family moved to Muskogee in 1995 to open the Waterloo Industries plant. Her husband, Loren was the Human Relations Manager for the plant and was responsible for recruiting, hiring and training of all employees. When Waterloo closed in 2005, her family stayed.

Johni started her work life in Muskogee as the Displaced Homemaker, Single Parent, and Single Pregnant Woman Coordinator at Indian Capital Technology Center. That program launched her crusade to help women in this community. When funding for that program ended, she moved into the position of Job Placement Coordinator at ICTC and that job took her into the world of the job seeking public and the challenges faced by the unemployed and underemployed, In 2008, she transitioned into the Instructional Services Office at Indian Capital where she works with a dynamic team of women who work with students and teachers on curriculum, college alliance and Tech Prep activities which includes grant writing and curriculum and career development.

Her community activities in Muskogee include:

Neighbors Building Neighborhoods
Certified Cities Initiative
Community Development Coalition
Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors (Family Support Chair)
Mayor Stratton’s Multi Cultural Committee
Projector Coordinator for Muskogee Habitat for Humanity’s first and only Women Build
Awarded Muskogee Phoenix’s 5 Who Care in 2000
Oklahoma Community Action Volunteer of the Year 1998
Helped organize Soroptimist Career Clothes Closet 1998
Founding Board Member for the Indian Capital Technology Center Foundation -2000
Opportunities Committee of the City of Muskogee Foundation - present
Leadership Muskogee Class XVI - present
True Color Facilitator for Leadership Muskogee and Youth Leadership Muskogee
Muskogee Area Literacy Council
St Paul United Methodist Church-Lay Leader, Staff Parish Relations Committee, Finance Committee,
Sunday School Teacher-Alpha/Omega Class, Women in Mission volunteer to UMCOR Sager Brown
in Baldwin, LA

The following quote is one she lives by:

“We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.”

- Marian Wright Edelman