

eliminating racism empowering women

ywca press release

YWCA of Greenville
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1st African-American Orthopaedic Pioneer at the YWCA of Greenville

The YWCA of Greenville in collaboration with Greenville Hospital System University Medical Center (GHS) and MLK Dream Weekend is honored to present a surgeon who heals, inspires and encourages others. Claudia Thomas, MD, the first black female orthopaedic surgeon in her field, will speak at the first Claudette Cureton Lecture series of 2010.

**Thursday, January 14, 2010 from 6pm-7pm
YWCA of Greenville, 700 Augusta Street, Greenville, SC 29605**

Dr. Claudia Thomas is a role model, not only for young women of color, but for all young men and women. She exudes the qualities we would want in our own children: honesty, ethics, and humility, to name only a few. Born in Brooklyn, New York, she attended the High School of Music and Art in Manhattan. Perfect scores in algebra and geometry earned her scholarships to the prestigious Vassar College, where she was President of the Students' Afro-American Society.

Dr. Thomas received her M.D. degree from The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, completing her orthopaedic residency training at Yale. **In 1980, she became not only the first female graduate of the Yale Orthopaedic Program, but the first African American female orthopaedic surgeon in the United States.** Dr. Thomas then went on to complete a trauma fellowship at the Shock Trauma Center of the University of Maryland Medical Center.

Following her trauma fellowship, Dr. Thomas was appointed Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. During her time at Johns Hopkins, she trained orthopaedic residents at the Baltimore City Hospitals. In 1985, she moved to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands where she worked in a government hospital and developed a private practice. Illness, with increasing renal failure, interrupted her professional activities. She had surgical removal of both kidneys and eventually received a donor kidney from her sister in 1991. She has done well medically since.

Dr. Thomas has received numerous national and local awards, including the 2008 Diversity Award from The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, the 2008 Spirituality and Medicine Award from Howard University Hospital, the Unsung Hero Award from the Baltimore Branch of the NAACP, the Living Legend Award from the Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Baltimore, MD, the Woman of the Year Health Services Award from the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, and the 2003 Women in Medicine Award, National Medical Association Council on the Concerns of Women Physicians. She has been a featured guest speaker on the Hour of Power Broadcast, Crystal Cathedral Ministries. Dr. Thomas has also been featured in the January/February 2009 edition of Profiles in Diversity Journal, "25 Influential African Americans in Business 2009," in the May 2008 issue of Black Enterprise Magazine, "America's Leading Doctors," the Villages Daily Sun, Baltimore Afro-American Newspaper, Orthopaedics Today, The Baltimore Times, Health Quest, Gospel Today,

Essence Magazine and the August 2001 issue of Black Enterprise Magazine, "America's Leading Black Doctors." Additionally, she was featured in 365 Days of Black History, 2002 Engagement Calendar and in a 2007 National Library of Medicine exhibit at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture entitled Opening Doors: Contemporary African American Academic Surgeons.

These impressive credentials still do not fully reveal Dr. Thomas' unwavering dedication to an orthopaedic future that will in her words, "*more closely represent the composition of the United States, as a whole, and its gender and racial mix of people.*"

It is this passion for advocacy that demonstrates her contributions to the Academy and to underserved communities around the country.

**The dialogue will be held on January 14, 2010 - 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm
YWCA of Greenville, 700 Augusta Street**

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The YWCA of Greenville is affiliated with YWCA USA, which was established in the United States in 1858 and is the oldest and largest national organization dedicated to the empowerment of women and girls and the elimination of racism. In its 92nd year, The YWCA of Greenville, works everyday to honor the women who have come before us, and all of the shoulders that we stand on today. YWCAs provide social services, advocacy, education, and leadership development, and have been involved in every phase of the civil rights movement since the abolition of slavery. Nearly 300 local YWCAs located across the nation reach 2.5 million women and girls, as well as their families.

For more information, visit www.ywcagreenville.org or call (864)373-6300.

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