



Included below is a press release regarding the Mentor a Child Forum at 6 p.m. June 4 in Ferris State University's Rankin Student Center Dome Room, which features keynote speaker Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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Forum Highlights New Ferris Orphan and Foster Youth Initiative

BIG RAPIDS – Big Rapids resident Sally Workman knows how important it is for children to have a mentor to help guide them through life. That is why she teamed up with Ferris State University to host the Mentor a Child Forum.

The forum, part of a new Ferris Orphan and Foster Youth Initiative, is set for 6 p.m. June 4 in Ferris' Rankin Student Center Dome Room and features keynote speaker Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly.

David Pilgrim, chief diversity officer at Ferris, said the event will help identify mentoring strategies and prospective mentors.

"I share Ms. Workman's commitment to making sure that young people who are impoverished orphans, or who have aged out of foster care, have the opportunity and resources to attend and successfully complete college," Pilgrim added.

Workman attributes her success as a college graduate and registered nurse to the efforts of her mentor: "A woman who invested time in me when no one else would," she said.

Spending the majority of her life in foster homes, Workman met her mentor in the workplace when she was 17-years-old. Seeing other teens in similar situations, she hoped she would be able to extend mentoring opportunities to these children facing the same struggles she did.

"I had a mentor who changed the direction of my life; I couldn't have had any of the opportunities that followed without her in my life," Workman said. "How many children need that exact same thing? How many children of all ages and of all circumstances, not just those whose are similar to what mine were, could be helped?"

Added Pilgrim, "Mentoring is critical to the success of all students, especially the young people in the Ferris Orphan and Foster Youth Initiative. Chief Justice Kelly is a forceful advocate for

mentoring young people and her talk – and the accompanying discussion – will be a boost to our work with this fledgling initiative.”

So far, people from more than 13 community organizations will attend the forum and provide information about how the public can volunteer as a mentor to young people in communities in and around Big Rapids, Workman said.

Keynote speaker Chief Justice Kelly earned her undergraduate degree from Eastern Michigan University and a master’s from Middlebury College in Vermont. She practiced law for 17 years before being elected to the Michigan Court of Appeals; in 1996, she was elected to the Michigan Supreme Court. During her second term, in 2009 she was elected chief justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. Her numerous community activities include serving as vice president of the board of the Detroit Institute of Technology and as a board member of the Women’s Survival Center in Pontiac.

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