



NASA astronaut and Alabama native Jemison to speak on importance of inclusion Feb. 17

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Mae Jemison, the first African American woman in space, will deliver the Extraordinary Women Lecture on Wednesday, Feb. 17, at 4 p.m. at The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center.

Jemison's talk, "On Fear, Audacity, and the Importance of Inclusion," the sixth in a lecture series presented by the Women's Leadership Institute in the College of Liberal Arts, is a collaborative effort among many university constituents.

Institute Executive Director Barbara Baker said the institute decided to bring Jemison as part of its shared efforts with University Outreach and the newly formed Tuskegee Auburn Women's Leadership Alliance. The two units will co-sponsor the outreach symposium scheduled for Feb. 15-17, with the Mae Jemison Lecture as the keynote event.

"We reached out broadly across campus for support and collaboration so that we could provide our students, faculty and community with the opportunity to interact with a truly extraordinary woman on a timely topic of relevance," Baker said.

Jemison, a native of Decatur, Alabama, served six years as a NASA astronaut and made her historic flight aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour in 1992. Since then she founded and leads the 100 Year Starship, an initiative of the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency, to assure the capability for human interstellar space travel.

As a medical doctor, member of the National Academy of Sciences, Peace Corp Medical Officer for Sierra Leone and Liberia, and professor of environmental studies at Dartmouth College, Jemison has a rich background that speaks to a host of topics of interest across campus. Her lecture on inclusion promises to inspire and encourage as she shares the achievements and obstacles in her own life.

"We think that the issue of inclusion is especially timely for us now," Baker said, "and we sought an extraordinary person who could offer universal wisdom through her very particular set of circumstances."

The Women's Leadership Institute's partnership with Auburn University Outreach led Baker and Director of Faculty Engagement, Chippewa Thomas, to invite several colleges and significant programs on campus to participate in the signature event of the symposium.

"We are delighted that so many units across campus have elected to engage in and support this event," Thomas said. "The symposium is an expression of the university's outreach, extension, public engagement and most especially, our land-grant mission."

Sponsors include the Colleges of Education, Engineering, Liberal Arts, Sciences and Mathematics, Veterinary Medicine, and the School of Nursing. Units involved include Access and Community Initiatives, University Outreach, WLI, the Biggio Center, Community and Civic Engagement, OLLI at Auburn, the Leahy Family and the Multicultural Center. Sponsoring departments are English, History and Music and the Africana and Women's Studies Programs.

The lecture will be followed by a book signing, and the event is free and open to the public.

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