

Chancellor receives ATHENA Award

May 24, 2005



KOKOMO, Ind.—The Women's Business Council of the Kokomo/Howard County Chamber of Commerce presented an ATHENA Award to Indiana University Kokomo Chancellor Ruth Person, Ph.D., on May 24, during the council's "Women of Influence" luncheon.

Given locally for the past eight years, the ATHENA Award recognizes individuals who assist women in realizing their fullest leadership potential; who help improve quality of life within their communities; and who demonstrate excellence, creativity, and initiative in their profession.

"Ruth Person has been fully engaged in the campus and the community," said presenter Kim LaFollette, chair of the Women's Business Council.

Chancellor of IU Kokomo since September 1999, Ruth Person has overseen several major campus accomplishments, including a significant increase in full-time student enrollment, improved facilities and funding for science education at IU Kokomo, and state approval for several new degree programs.

She is actively involved in 18 boards of directors and advisory boards for numerous community agencies, including the Indiana Technology Partnership, Indiana Campus Compact, North Central Indiana Small Business Development Center, North Central Indiana Workforce Investment Board, Howard County Partners in Education, St. Vincent Health St. Joseph Hospital, and the Kokomo/Howard County Library. Until last year, Person represented IU Kokomo on the Chamber of Commerce Women's Business Council. The campus' Assistant Director of Business and Community Outreach Candy Norman filled her place on the council.

"I would like to thank everyone for this distinct honor," Person said in accepting the ATHENA Award. "Promoting women in all walks of life has always been important to me, and I have lots of women in my life who have helped me in both my personal and professional life."

Person saluted past mentors and her current advisors—IU Kokomo's vice chancellors Stuart Green, Bill Yost, and Jack Tharp. "If I am Gladys Knight, they are my 'Pips,' " she said. "They have been very supportive of me."

Past local recipients of the ATHENA Award have included Debbie Clason, director of marketing for Howard Regional Health System, and Jill Dunn, president of Bona Vista Programs and a member of the IU Kokomo Advisory Board.

The ATHENA Award program is operated by the non-profit ATHENA Foundation, based in Michigan. Founded in 1982, the foundation works with hundreds of organizations, including chambers of commerce, universities, major corporations, and small businesses, to help open leadership opportunities for women. Chambers of commerce represent the largest group of hosts for the ATHENA award program.

The award is named for Athena, the Greek goddess of reason and courage. Award recipients are presented an original bronze statue inspired by the legend of Athena. The ATHENA Foundation Web site describes the statue as follows:

"Sculptor Linda Ackley creates each bronze sculpture using the laborious lost-wax technique in her

foundry located in Cedar, Mich. Each unique sculpture is numbered as one of a select edition.

“The black marble base represents the recipient's solid foundation. The unique textures of the bronze differ on each sculpture, just as the life experiences of the recipients differ. The cut crystal symbolizes the many facets of human character and the light emanating from the recipient. Viewed from various angles, this form's outstretched arms can be seen to express the celebration of achievement and reaching out to others.”