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Women's group to host luncheon with Gloria Steinem By Angela Greiner Contributing Writer



Women's rights activist Gloria Steinem SUBMITTED

Region - The Westborough-based nonprofit organization Female Leadership Interest Council (FLIC) is bringing the renowned women's rights advocate Gloria Steinem to its inaugural luncheon. The event, which will be held at Mechanics Hall in Worcester Saturday Nov. 30, is the first of four scheduled events to be hosted by FLIC over the next year that will feature women who have blazed a trail in a particular area.

FLIC founder and Chair of the Board Deborah Penta explained that the group's mission is to provide female leadership and education through programs like guest luncheons and mentoring programs.

Steinem was a natural choice for the launch of the organization's quarterly luncheons, Penta said.

"As I think back to the most influential trailblazer who stood apart for women, it is most definitely Gloria Steinem," Penta said. "Without the movement that Steinem started, organizations like FLIC would not be in existence."

Steinem's fate as a women's rights activist was sealed after she wrote an article in 1962 for "Esquire" magazine about how women were forced to choose between a career and marriage, while men were not.

After a career that including founding "Ms." magazine and co-founding "New York" magazine, Steinem was inducted into both the Women's Hall of Fame and the American Society of Magazine Editors.

Penta, who is the president and CEO of Penta Communications, felt prompted to establish FLIC after working with women for several years. Through programs such as ones in which women mentor women, they can begin to deal with some of the unspoken issues that women deal with, she explained.

"I have never been a believer in pulling people down," Penta said. "There is a corporate denial about workplaces and how women compete with each other. Women can do a better job of supporting each other."

Although women hold 50 percent of all upper level management positions, Penta said, there are still several issues that women face. Some of the most prevalent that women in the FLIC face are: workplace sabotage, the glass ceiling, balancing family and work, and self-esteem.

Steinem, who is now in her seventies, fought for rights that many younger professionals now take for granted. The women's movement brought a digression for women from the typical roles of the male-dominated society in the 1950s. Her writings and opinions through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, which were very controversial at the time, helped bring about the current gender roles that are the accepted norm for women now.

Penta, who is expecting a sell-out crowd, encouraged people to register as soon as possible.

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"I hope that the people who attend the event enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet the most influential American female trailblazer," Penta said.

The event, which begins at 11 a.m. with a private meet-and-greet session with Steinem, will then be followed by the luncheon from 12 to 1:30 p.m.

For more information about FLIC or attending the event, contact Debbie Desposito at 508-616-9900, ext. 110, or visit www.femaleleaders.org.

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