



National Association of Independent
Colleges and Universities

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CONTACT: Libby May, libby@naicu.edu
office: 202-739-0477 cell: 301-529-7313

Sister Kathleen Ross Selected to Receive 2010 Paley Award for Service to Independent Higher Education

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Sister Kathleen Ross, founding president of Heritage University, has been selected by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) to receive the 2010 Henry Paley Memorial Award. She will receive the award from NAICU President David L. Warren on Tuesday, Feb.2, at the NAICU annual meeting. The meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill.

Since 1985, the Paley Award has recognized an individual who, throughout his or her career, has unfailingly served the students and faculty of independent higher education. The recipient of this award has set an example for all who would seek to advance educational opportunity in the United States. The Paley Award is named for Henry Paley, president of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities of New York from 1975 until 1984.

Heritage University was created in 1981, by two Yakama women who persuaded Ross to join them as founding president. Since then, Heritage has grown and succeeded in its mission "to provide quality, accessible higher education to multicultural populations which have been educationally isolated." Located on the Yakama reservation, the university's home town of Toppenish is abundant in those who traditionally would find it difficult or impossible to earn a college degree - immigrants, Native Americans, first generation college students and students from low-income families.

“Within the realm of independent higher education, Sister Kathleen stands as a true pioneer,” said NAICU President David L. Warren. “The association is privileged to award her the 24th annual Henry Paley Award in recognition of her exemplary service to underserved students, and her leadership in inspiring others to reach out to the forgotten,”

Last March, Ross announced that she would begin the transition to new leadership for Heritage. Upon retiring from the Heritage presidency at the end of the academic year, she will head a new national institute based at the university, and dedicated to improving the success of first-generation college students.

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NAICU serves as the unified national voice of independent higher education. With nearly 1,000 member institutions and associations nationwide, NAICU reflects the diversity of private, nonprofit higher education in the United States. NAICU members enroll nine out of every 10 students attending private institutions. They include traditional liberal arts colleges, major research universities, church- and faith-related institutions, historically black colleges, Hispanic-serving institutions, single-sex colleges, art institutions, two-year colleges, and schools of law, medicine, engineering, business, and other professions.

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