

Muriel Ross '48, A Leader Among Michigan Women

By Tonya Schafer '02 Contributing Writer
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For Muriel Ross '48, the best thing about being inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame was not the acclaim but the fact that one of her daughters introduced her during the awards ceremony in October.

"I think that's kind of unusual. I was pleased it could happen," Ross said.

Her work in the areas of medical research and social activism had brought Ross to the attention of Hall of Fame staffers, who selected her to join an elite group of women that includes activist Rosa Parks and former first lady Betty Ford.

The path to success began at Aquinas, from which Ross graduated with a biology major. She went on to earn a master's degree and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, where she taught for several years and was active in a women's caucus that pushed for gender equity in salaries and promotions on campus.

For 13 years, Ross worked at NASA's Ames Research Center in California, conducting experiments on the correlation between weightlessness and balance. Her research won Ross a Nylene Medal from the Barany Society, an organization devoted to inner ear research.

Ross also worked on a computer program that provides three dimensional simulation of surgical procedures. Applications for the software include training physicians and engaging in long distance diagnosis and treatment.

Since retiring from Ames, Ross has continued her research at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. She lives in that state with her husband, Bernard. "We like the southwest climate better," Ross said.

Equally proud of her four daughters' professional accomplishments as she is of her own, Ross said her Aquinas experiences have contributed to what she is today. "Sister Celeste, Monsignor Bukowski—the teaching was excellent," Ross said. "It gave me a strong foundation for going on to get my Ph.D."