

Dr. Melba Beals to Retire in 2014

Shortly after joining Dominican, Dr. Beals founded a communications program that has grown into the Department of Communications and Media Studies. Dr. Beals led the department, first as director and then as chair, as it grew in enrollment and academic programming.

Thanks to her leadership, the Department responded swiftly to the rapidly changing media industry. As the news broadcasting and publishing industries merged with video and web formats, the department broadened to reflect this media convergence. Students gained the opportunity to write across media and learn new technologies such as podcasting, broadcasting and production of enriched online viewer experiences.

The department also expanded to enable students to pursue their studies along more specialized paths. Today the Department of Communications and Media Studies offers courses in cinema studies, print media, broadcasting, corporate communications and sports communications.

Dr. Beals introduced several programs that allowed students to gain real-world experiences while studying communications at Dominican. She oversaw development and growth of radio.dominican.edu, the university's student-operated Internet radio station, as well as *The Habit*, the student-managed newspaper. Dr. Beals helped to establish the Bettie Grinnell Communications Lab in Archbishop Alemany Library, leading fundraising efforts to upgrade the lab and collaborating on the design and layout.

Since 2001, Dr. Beals has been a founding member of the Diversity Action Group, which is credited with collaboratively transforming Dominican into a diversity affirming institution at a time when the University's student body was becoming increasingly diverse. In 2012, Dr. Beals created the TORCH (Together on the Road to New Chapters) leadership program designed to support students entering Dominican with a structured orientation program followed by ongoing mentoring.

Just as her work at Dominican is defined by her commitment to our students, Dr. Beals' life is defined by her commitment to equality for all. She is a true champion of justice and equity.

In 1957, Dr. Beals was one of nine African-American high school students to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Under protection of the 101st Airborne dispatched by President Eisenhower, Dr. Beals and eight other African American youths integrated the previously all-white Central High School. The Little Rock Nine defied mobs and death threats to tear down walls of segregation. A detailed account of this historical incident may be found in her award-winning memoir, *Warriors Don't Cry*, which has been translated into five different languages.

Warriors Don't Cry won the 1994 American Library Association Award for Nonfiction Book of the Year, was named a Notable Book of the year by the American Booksellers Association, and received the coveted Robert F. Kennedy Award for Excellence in Writing. A play based on the book was produced by [The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts](#). It has been performed in New York City and throughout New England.

Dr. Beals holds more than 100 awards for heroism and courage. In 1999, the U.S. Congress voted Dr. Beals and her Little Rock Nine companions the Congressional Gold Medal – the nation's highest honor – for their contribution to the Civil Rights movement. In 2002, Dr. Beals

was inducted to the Marin Women's Hall of Fame. In 2012, she was honored by the Marin Human Rights Commission.

In 2007, in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the integration of Central High School, the U.S. Postal Service issued a postage stamp to honor the Little Rock Nine. The Post Office's stamp was one of 10 commemorative postage stamps in a series called "To Form a More Perfect Union." That same year, Dr. Beals and the other eight members of the Little Rock Nine attended the unveiling of a life-size statue of all nine on the grounds of the Arkansas State Capitol. The sculpture depicts the Little Rock Nine walking together, books in hand, as they did in 1957 entering the historic high school. Also in 2007, the United States Mint issued the Little Rock Central High School Desegregation silver dollar.

Dr. Beals has had successful careers in journalism and public relations, holding posts as an on-camera television reporter for KQED's noted *Newsroom* and as an NBC-TV news reporter, and as a radio news talk show host for KGO, ABC radio, San Francisco. Her articles have appeared in *People*, *Family Circle*, *Ladies Home Journal* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* Sunday magazine.

Dr. Beals earned her bachelor's degree in journalism from San Francisco State University and a graduate certificate in journalism and media granted by the Ford Foundation and Columbia University as one of 32 minorities throughout the country chosen to integrate the media. In 2009, she received her doctoral degree in international multicultural studies from the University of San Francisco.

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