



News Release

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Reinhardt Named Century College 2010 Outstanding Alum

Century College has named Ramsey County Commissioner Dr. Victoria Reinhardt its 2010 Outstanding Alum.

Reinhardt will address Century College graduates at the college commencement ceremony at Aldrich Arena on Friday, May 14, beginning at 7 p.m.

Reinhardt started attending Century, the former Lakewood Community College, in 1985 and finished with her Associate in Arts degree nearly five years later. A divorced single mom, she took one or two classes at a time as she struggled to keep her life in balance.

“I still remember the day I made the decision to go to college,” said Reinhardt, interviewed in her Ramsey County office on West Kellogg Boulevard in downtown St. Paul. “I was walking through the St. Paul skyways with my sons and we were talking about jobs and college. My son Michael, who was 12 at the

time, said he didn't need to go to college because he could be successful like me without going to college."

Reinhardt said she stopped dead in her tracks and told her son that he should never underestimate the value of an education. She told him that an education would open doors for him so that he wouldn't have to bang down doors to gain opportunity. And then she made a decision: she would go to college to set an example for her children.

Reinhardt started at Century, the former Lakewood, because it was close to her home and affordable. As a busy single mom, a two-year AA degree sounded do-able. "If someone had said to me at that time that I was on a track to earning a doctorate degree, I wouldn't have even taken that first step," said Reinhardt, who finally earned her doctorate in public administration from Hamline University in 2007. She earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Metropolitan State University. "I needed to start with something achievable. I was a single mom and unemployed. I was trying to figure out how to make a better life for my kids and myself. Education was the key."

Reinhardt advised people to start their higher education journey with something they can handle. "It doesn't matter how old you are," she said. "It doesn't matter how busy you are. Maybe it will take longer to earn that degree. But you need to get it done. The time to start is now. It will be worth it."

Reinhardt is known for her work on environmental, juvenile justice and also domestic abuse issues.

Having experienced domestic abuse in her first marriage, Reinhardt said she wants people to know that this is a problem that can happen to anyone. "Emotional and verbal abuse cause the scars that are the hardest to heal," she said.

Divorced in 1985, Reinhardt married J.P. Barone, an assistant Minnesota attorney general, in 1991. In addition to her two sons, she has one grandson.

Reinhardt has been serving on the Ramsey County Board since 1996 and is currently the board chair.



Photo: Century's 2010 Outstanding Alum Dr. Victoria Reinhardt