

Lucille Ford honored at Statehouse

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Businesswoman and notable Ashlander Lucille Garber Ford speaks during ceremonies at the Ohio Statehouse Thursday, where she was inducted into the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. (Marc Kovac Photo)

Ashland legend inducted into Ohio Senior Citizens HOF

COLUMBUS -- Lucille Garber Ford has four things she wants you to remember.

"Take care of your body, continue to learn, remember socialization -- we need each other -- and, fourth, your faith, your faith in God," she said.

Those are things the longtime Ashlander, noted for her work as an economist, administrator and business executive and as the first woman to run for lieutenant governor in Ohio, has adhered to throughout her decades of work in the business world and for civic and charitable groups.

And on Thursday, Ford was honored at the Statehouse as one of eight inductees into the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame, an effort by the Ohio Department of Aging and Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging to honor older residents for their contributions to their communities.

"We are here today to celebrate the fact that older Ohioans have a lifetime of knowledge and experiences that not only make them our elders but also position them to be leaders and contributors in our communities," said Stephanie Loucka, director of the Ohio Department of Aging.

She added, "Ohio's elders play a vital role in their families, in our communities and in our state. Thus, we work every day to ensure that they have ample opportunities to continue to grow, thrive and contribute throughout their lives. The eight people we honoring here today are living examples of the contributing good that can come when our elders' contributions are valued and encouraged."

The Hall is open to Ohioans age 60 or older who were born in the state or lived here at least a decade. More than 450 residents have been inducted to date.

Ford was the first and only woman to serve on the Ohio Edison Co. Board of Directors and the first woman appointed to National City Bank board. Holding a doctorate in economics from Case Western Reserve University, she instructed thousands of students at Ashland University and held various leadership posts in four-plus decades of service there before retiring in 1995. She continues to serve as provost, professor and trustee emeritus at the college.

Ford also served for nearly two decades on the Ashland County Community Foundation, is an elder at Ashland's First Presbyterian Church and was inducted in 2001 into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame.

In 1978, Ford was running mate to former Ohio House Speaker Charles Kurfess for that year's gubernatorial election. Kurfess was on hand for Thursday's ceremonies, as was the president of Ashland University, Ford's two daughters and others celebrating her induction.

"Life is really very simple," Ford said. "... To love and to be loved and to be productive. Whatever it is you do, do it with your heart, do it with your mission, do it with your satisfaction, (make) a contribution (to the greater good)."

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