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Canadian Olympic medalist Joannie Rochette to speak at Outstanding Women of Laurier event

WATERLOO – Canadian figure skater and Olympic bronze medalist Joannie Rochette will deliver the keynote address at the Outstanding Women of Laurier (OWL) event Tuesday, March 8, at 11 a.m. at the Waterloo Inn Conference Hotel.

When Rochette earned a bronze medal at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, she became the first Canadian women's figure skater to stand on the Olympic medal podium in 22 years.

“Joannie’s story of overcoming personal challenge to achieve excellence at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics will be inspiring,” said Peter Baxter, director of athletics and recreation at Laurier. “Her success as a six-time Canadian National gold medalist is a true testament to her dedication and perseverance. Uncompromising personal character and excellence in sport is one of the hallmarks of the OWL luncheon.”

At the Olympic Games, Rochette was named co-recipient of the Vancouver 2010 Terry Fox Award, honouring athletes who epitomize determination in motion and push on despite pain or obstacles in their path. She was also selected as Canada’s flag bearer in the Olympic closing ceremonies.

Rochette has competed at the World Skating Championships since 2003, placing in the top 10 four times and earning a silver medal in 2009. She has won several International Skating Union Grand Prix events, and toured with Stars on Ice Canada in 2010. Off the ice, Rochette shows a commitment to humanitarian causes, and recently travelled to Peru with World Vision Canada.

The Outstanding Women of Laurier Award will be presented at the March 8 event to a student-athlete selected from a number of finalists. The award recognizes a female Laurier student who successfully combines athletic and academic achievement with an active commitment to leadership and the development of young athletes through community teaching or coaching.

“We are thrilled to be celebrating the Outstanding Women of Laurier luncheon for the sixth time,” Baxter said. “This event showcases our exceptional female student-athletes and the impact they are having within our community.”

The Outstanding Women of Laurier luncheon will be hosted again by Daiene Vernile, anchor and producer of *Provincewide*, the CTV current affairs program, and a Laurier alumna (BA '85). Originally from Toronto, Vernile began her broadcasting career at multicultural radio station CHIN. After working as the station’s legislative reporter for many years, Vernile moved to Texas and reported for an ABC affiliate. In the early 1980s, she returned to Canada and has worked at CTV Southwestern Ontario ever since.

For more information about the Outstanding Women of Laurier luncheon, or to purchase tickets online, please visit www.laurierathletics.com/owl.