

## Gallaudet University president to deliver Riley Lecture at Alfred University

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Roberta Cordano

ALFRED, NY – Roberta Cordano, the first female deaf president at Gallaudet University, will deliver the 23rd annual Riley Lecture in Women’s Studies on April 26 at Alfred University.

Cordano’s lecture, titled “Creating a Sense of Belonging: Musings of a Deaf Woman College President,” will be held at 5:30 p.m. in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center. The Riley Lecture is sponsored each year by the Women’s and Gender Studies Program at Alfred University.

Gallaudet University, located in Washington, D.C., is the premier institution for learning, teaching and research for deaf and hearing-impaired students. Cordano became the 11th president at Gallaudet on Jan. 1, 2016. Her talk will focus on what it takes to create a sense of community that allows all members to learn and grow. It will also address questions on how to build communities that embrace diversity, intersectionality, and the many ways individuals self-identify themselves.

Cordano earned a BA degree from Beloit College in 1986 and went on to receive a law degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prior to becoming the president of Gallaudet University, she was the vice president of programs for the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, a non-profit community organization in Saint Paul, MN. She began her career

as an assistant attorney general for the State of Minnesota, where among other duties, she served as an expert on the Americans with Disabilities Act and other disability-related laws.

She is a founding member of the Metro Deaf School, a bilingual-bicultural charter school for deaf and hard of hearing children in St. Paul, and a founding board member of Minnesota North Star Academy, a bilingual-bicultural charter high school for deaf and hard of hearing students.

A reception, with hors d'oeuvres and refreshments, will be held following Cordano's lecture.

Once a year, Alfred University hosts the Elizabeth Hallenbeck Riley and Charles P. Riley Lectureship in Women's and Gender Studies. Charles Riley '35 and Elizabeth Hallenbeck Riley '36 were Alfred University graduates. Elizabeth was a local activist involved in women's rights issues. Their daughters, Pamela Riley Osborn '62, Patricia A. Riley '65, and Melissa Riley generously sponsored the lecture series in memory of their parents. The Riley sisters' gift is a completion of the memorial Charles Riley had planned for his wife but had not completed before his death.

At the inaugural lecture in April 1996, Dr. Karen Porter, former director of the Women's and Gender Studies program, noted that the lectureship "validates the work of women's studies. It reaffirms our sense of community, and it helps make that community visible."

The Riley Lecture Series sustains and nurtures faculty and student interest in Women's Studies by bringing reputed women scholars and professionals to campus each year. The Riley Lecture preserves the interdisciplinary nature of women's studies by bringing scholars and professionals from a variety of disciplines to campus to give a lecture and participate in one or more women's studies classes.