

First Woman, African-American to Direct an NOAA Office to Speak Feb. 16 at UCSD as Part of Black History Month

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Jan Jennings

Rear Adm. Evelyn Fields, USN, ret., is the first woman and the first African American to serve as director of the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations at the Naval Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This is just two of Fields' "firsts."

Fields will speak on *Journey to Empowerment* at 2:30 p.m. Feb. 16 in the Price Center Ballroom at the University of California, San Diego. The lecture is part of UCSD's Black History Month activities. It is free and open to the public.

UCSD Chancellor Marye Anne Fox will introduce the admiral.

In *Journey to Empowerment*, Fields will discuss her career and how she came to be a rear admiral, the first - and so far, the only - woman to reach the rank of rear admiral in the NOAA Corps, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C.

A graduate of Norfolk State University, Fields was commissioned an ensign in the NOAA Corps in 1973, the first African-American woman to join the corps. Fields served on the ships Mt. Mitchell, Peirce, and Rainier and was the first woman to command a NOAA ship, the McArthur.

In her 28-year career, Fields says she found "opportunities galore, a few hardships and many challenges." She also earned personal and professional recognition. Fields was named one of the top 50 minority women in science and engineering by the National Technical Association in 1999. Also that year she received the Ralph M. Metcalfe Health, Education and Science award from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

In 2000, Fields was awarded a Gold Medal by the U.S. Department of Commerce, its highest honor for leadership.

Fields recently retired as director of NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, a post to which she was nominated by President Bill Clinton and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. She served from May, 1999 to December, 2004.

Fields' lecture is sponsored by the UCSD Black Staff Association and Scripps Aquarium. For further information contact Terece Moret at (858) 964-1061.

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