

Friedan fundraising resumes at party

Task force hoping to name child care center after feminist icon

BY TERRY BIBO
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PEORIA — A second round of fundraising begins this week for the woman who began the second wave of American feminism last century.

Peorian Betty Friedan — co-founder of the National Organization for Women, author of "The Feminine Mystique" and "The Second Stage" — would have been 89 years old Thursday. The Betty Friedan Tribute Task Force will hold a party in her honor from 5 to 7 p.m. at the YWCA Lakeview. If all goes according to plan, the child care center at that facility will be named for Friedan upon completion of a \$100,000 fundraising campaign.

"We all agreed a cold piece of stone pigeons would take target

practice on was not what Betty Friedan was about," said committee member Fran Kepler. "This fits."

While the feminist icon does not evoke a picture of rocking chairs and tot-cuddling at first, Kepler said it is time for the group to connect the dots: Child care is integral to Friedan's vision.

"We've had some questions from the community on this," Kepler said. "This is exactly what Betty Friedan put forward at the end of 'The Feminine Mystique,' what was needed for women to aspire to their highest potential."

Fellow committee member Dorothy Sinclair pointed out that slightly more than half the people in the work force are women. A chemist who chose to be a home-



BETTY FRIEDAN

If you go

Who: Betty Friedan

What: Party and performance of a one-act, one-woman play on Friedan written by local author Channy Lyons

When: 5 p.m. Thursday reception; 6 p.m. performance.

Where: YWCA Lakeview.

Cost: Free, but reservations are required. Call 685-7655, Ext. 211.

maker and mother, Sinclair has said she probably wouldn't have run for the Peoria City Council without Friedan's influence. And child care is a key factor in the decision to work outside the home.

"That is so important to the working woman," confirmed Pam Schubach, YWCA executive director. "It all wraps together. Our children are our future."

The discussion began in 2007,

when a group of local women realized that little had been done here to recognize Friedan's cultural contributions. Even though she has been named one of the most influential women of the last century on several lists, they were shocked to learn many people in her hometown had no idea of Friedan's significance.

"In general, people didn't know who Betty Friedan was, what she stood for; that she was a Peorian," Kepler said.

The first round of fundraising got off to a good start, garnering \$23,000 of the total. Then the bottom dropped out of the stock market in October 2008, and the group had to reconsider its plans. Now an educational component will accompany all fundraising efforts. That begins with Thursday's performance of a one-act, one-woman play on Friedan written by local author Channy Lyons.

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