

How do you spell success? R-o-n-n-a

She has Romney name, but supplies her own grit

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

Before starting her talk, Ronna Romney couldn't resist wiping off the top of the podium with her hand.

"That's the housewife coming out in me. It's very dusty," Romney said with a laugh to her audience of Oakland Community College (OCC) students.

The daughter-in-law of former Republican governor George Romney and a woman who has achieved success in her own right, Ronna was invited to talk about success to the students.

She was recently elected a Michigan representative to the prestigious national Republican committee defeating two other candidates for the post.

ROMNEY, 40, and her husband, Scott, an attorney, are active in philanthropic causes as well as politics. She has recently written a book and is mother to five children ranging from a 4-year-old preschooler to a 20-year-old OCC student who is determined to work his way through college. She is also chairing the Michigan finance committee for the re-election of President Reagan.

She confessed that her life these days is a "balancing act."

In politics, Romney expects to make an impact on national Republican policy.

"I think I'm in the forefront of a different kind of woman coming into politics," she said. "I represent a more moderate voice. You can be all woman — very feminine — and still have a lot to offer."

Romney advised her audience that wealth is not the key to success.

BEING SUCCESSFUL is "being happy, fulfilled and reaching some kind of contentment," she said.

"I've known a lot of successful people, and in the end what they consider important are their personal relationships."

"When they talk about success, they

don't measure it in terms of money," Romney, who teaches a Sunday school class in her Mormon church, said her goal for her children is personal happiness.

She said experiencing success means also knowing failure.

She talked about her own case of "F.O.P." — or "fear of failure."

Romney said her concern for what others might think about her kept her from trying out for the student council or choir while she was student at Seaborn High School in Birmingham.

"I was never willing to put myself on the line and fail. I also didn't succeed," said Romney, who said she won't allow her children to say "I can't."

As an adult, she said she found out that taking chances can be worth the risk.

SHE WAS divorced at 22 with a young son when she met Scott Romney on a blind date. "He thinks I can do anything, that I'm superwoman. But I'm not. I don't do everything well," she said.

As a member of the Romney family, life was "like an eternal sorority rush." She said she forced herself to contribute. "I would lose weeks of sleep before a speech. It was so hard," Romney recalled.

Working on several campaigns meant some wins and some losses. But all were learning experiences for Romney.

Tired of "lunch at Somerset Mall with the girls," the former elementary school teacher decided to get a master's degree in math. But juggling a computer class and catering to her family turned out to be too much to handle.

And her effort to write a book also ended in 200 rejection slips from publishers.

"I WAS an absolute flop. I just couldn't make it," recalled Romney, who learned from that dismal experience and went on to author a successful book on marriages called "Giving Time a Chance."



'I've known a lot of successful people, and in the end what they consider important are their personal relationships.'



'There isn't anybody in this world who can tell you that you can't do anything. The two most powerful words in the world are 'I can.''



'I could be a little princess, live in the governor's old house and go to Somerset Mall and eat, eat, eat. But how meaningless.'

"So many people I have met in business have had failure after failure, but you don't remember the failures. You remember the successes," she said.

Romney's advice on achieving success included learning how to think positively. She follows her own advice by reading books that "lift" her up.

"You have to keep feeding yourself,

pumping yourself up, to keep going," she said.

"There isn't anybody in this world who can tell you that you can't do anything. The two most powerful words in the world are 'I can.'"

Drawing on political examples, she urged the students to keep plugging away at success.

"LINCOLN was a real loser until he ran for president," she said. "And the classic guy who never quits is Richard Nixon. You sweat him down, and he gets up and tries again."

"I give him credit. He's a gutsy guy."

Romney is planning another book, this time on women.

President Reagan's record on wom-

en's issues is controversial. But she sees three women in the cabinet and a woman Supreme Court justice as proof that there is "more mobility for women under this administration."

She'd like to see more women trained for political office, since many have been home taking care of families and don't have the credentials needed to run.

Romney doesn't rule out political office for herself someday, but she said it won't be in the near future because she is busy taking care of her children.

"But I don't need to be in the forefront if I'm working for a good candidate," she said.

AS A NATIONAL committee member Romney is required to attend only four meetings a year in Washington, D.C. Other party duties, such as helping raise \$100,000 for the president's re-election campaign, take more time.

Her active life isn't always easy. The family now eats fast foods more often and her husband is learning to cook.

And there's the criticism from those who accuse her of the "rich dilettante syndrome."

"How do you fight it?" asks Romney, who admits her husband compares her to the TV character Lucy Ricardo (Lucille Ball played the part on "I Love Lucy") because he never knows what she'll tackle next.

Ex-CIA deputy speaks on arms control at OU

Herbert Scoville, former CIA deputy director for research and current president of the Arms Control Association, will be a featured speaker at Peace In Search of Makers II.

The symposium on national security and disarmament will be from noon to 5 p.m. Monday, March 26 at Oakland University.

Scoville will be joined by Richard Barnett, co-founder of the Institute for Policy Study; John Marshall Lee, former adviser to the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations; and William Courtney, deputy director of the Office of Strategic Nuclear Policy in the State Department.

There is a \$5 registration fee. To register, call 373-6457.

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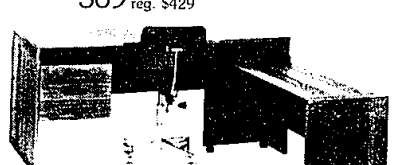
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