



RUDERMAN
INCLUSION SUMMIT

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Speaker Biography

Loretta Claiborne



Who is Loretta Claiborne? In Loretta's words, she is "just one of God's children." But to all who know her, truly she is an amazing and inspiring woman who has not only touched the lives, but changed the lives of people with whom she has met.

Ms. Claiborne, a Special Olympics athlete since 1970, is a woman of faith who shares her life story that carries a heart-felt message of acceptance, hope and tolerance for all people around the world. Born with both a physical and intellectual disability, she did not walk or talk until she was four years old.

She learned to persevere in spite of her disabilities, the bullying, teasing, and anger and credits Special Olympics as her positive force that turned her life around. Her motto is "God is my strength, Special Olympics is my joy". In 2000, Walt Disney Productions created Disney's The Loretta Claiborne Story. "I figured if my story could change a person's mind about another person who has an intellectual disability, or especially a child's mind about another child, then, it was the right thing to do," Claiborne says. Loretta is a world-class runner and gifted motivational speaker who still competes in Special Olympics.

Loretta is a passionate advocate for people with intellectual and physical disabilities. Her life's accolades are too many to count, but a few of her most impressive accomplishments include:

- 1996 - Arthur Ashe Award for Courage - ESPY Awards
- 2000 - Walt Disney Productions - Movie Biography-The Loretta Claiborne Story (TV, DVD)
- Recipient of 2 Honorary Doctorate Degrees - Quinnipiac College and Villanova University
- Has run 26 marathons with her personal best time of 3:03 in the Boston Marathon in 1982
- Twice, she finished in the top 100 women in the Boston Marathon

- Finished in the top 25 female runners in the Pittsburgh Marathon in 1988
- Holds a 4th degree Black Belt in karate
- Speaks fluent American Sign Language and is conversational in Spanish and Russian
- Spoke to the Joint session of the US Congress
- Addressed the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee on Disparities in Health Care for the Intellectually Challenged Individuals
- Invited speaker for the Clinton Global Initiative (2012 and 2013)– spoke to global leaders about inclusion for persons with intellectual disabilities
- Invited speaker to the United Nations Summit (2012 and 2013); Topic: Promoting Inclusion for persons with intellectual disabilities and global ratification for persons with intellectual disabilities.
- First SO athlete to serve on the Board of Directors for Special Olympics Incorporated – Washington, DC; Executive Committee; currently she is in her 4th term
- Appeared on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” in 1998 to promote Special Olympics’ 30th Anniversary, and again in 2000 to promote her movie
- Twice, she traveled across South Africa with President Nelson Mandela promoting Special Olympics and the betterment of persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Has spoken all over the world promoting Special Olympics and the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Was invited five times to visit and dine at the White House with Presidents Reagan, GH Bush, Clinton, and GW Bush, and Obama

This is just a snapshot of who Loretta Claiborne is and some of the things that she has accomplished in her life. To learn more about Loretta, we invite you to navigate through her website www.lorettaclaiborne.com. Maybe Loretta will inspire YOU as well.