

**“Homeless to Harvard”
Heroine Liz Murray
To Speak Oct. 21
in JPH Lecture at Northark**



Liz Murray’s story sounds like a Hollywood movie – and it practically is. Murray, the subject of the Lifetime Television movie *Homeless to Harvard: The Liz Murray Story*, will speak Thursday, Oct. 21, at 6:30 p.m. in the John Paul Hammerschmidt Lecture Series at North Arkansas College. Her talk is open to the public free of charge in the Conference Center of the John Paul Hammerschmidt Business and Conference Center on Northark’s South Campus in Harrison.

From homeless to Harvard . . . it is an unlikely turn of events. Liz Murray’s life is a triumph over adversity and a stunning example of the importance of dreaming big. Liz’s childhood as the daughter of cocaine-addicted parents in the Bronx was bitterly grim. There was never food in the house, everything was filthy, drugs were everywhere, and the welfare checks were spent before they arrived.

By age 15, Liz’s mom had died and she was homeless – living on the streets, riding the subway all night, and eating from dumpsters. Amidst this pain, Liz always imagined her life could be much better than it was. “I started to grasp the value of the lessons learned while living on the streets,” she says. “I knew, after overcoming those daily obstacles, that next to nothing could hold me down.”

Determined to take charge of her life, Liz finished high school in just two years while camping out in New York City parks and subway stations. She went on to earn a scholarship from the *New York Times* and entered Harvard in 2000. In order to be closer to her ill father, Liz has since chosen to attend Columbia University.

Liz's story is exhilarating and her delivery innocently honest, as she takes audiences on a very personal journey where she achieves the improbable. A recipient of Oprah Winfrey's first ever Chutzpah Award, Liz is currently writing her memoirs for Hyperion. The book is due out in early 2005.

This will be the 11th presentation in the JPH Lecture Series. Murray follows astronaut Dr. Jerry Linenger, Sherpa mountain guide Jamling Tenzing Norgay, CIA officers Tony and Jonna Mendez, internationally syndicated columnist Gwynne Dyer, former North Vietnam prisoner of war Colonel Edward L. Hubbard, 1972 Olympic 800-meter-run champion Dave Wottle, FDNY Chief Richard "Pitch" Picciotto, Harrison native and music therapy specialist Dr. Frederick (Ted) Tims, Savant Syndrome expert Dr. Darold Treffert, and retired Wal-Mart senior vice-chairman Don Soderquist as a speaker in the series.

Funded by private gifts to the North Arkansas College Foundation, the JPH Lecture Series sponsors national experts to speak about topics of interest to the people of northern Arkansas. Congressman Hammerschmidt has an office at Northark, and many of his photographs, awards, and other memorabilia are on display in the building that bears his name.