

Jackie Joyner-Kersey is among 'women of power' honored by Urban League

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ST. LOUIS — The National Urban League honored six "women of power" Saturday, including Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey and U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif.

Waters' home district includes south-central Los Angeles, but she credited her St. Louis upbringing for making her what some call feisty and confrontational.

"We had a sense of self, and if we fight, we can win," she told the luncheon crowd at America's Center.

The Iraq war must end, she said, and the money redirected to a domestic agenda and programs like the Urban League to steer youth away from drugs and gangs.

To stop the genocide in Darfur, Waters supports sanctions — including a ban on the U.S. importation of gum arabic, an important ingredient in soft drink syrup. It is grown in Sudan.

Also honored by the Urban League were Frankie Freeman, a civil rights lawyer here; Sylvia Brooks of the Houston Area Urban League; Carla Harris, managing director of Global Capital Markets for Morgan Stanley; and Gwen Ifill, moderator and managing editor of Washington Week and senior correspondent for "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer."