

NJSFWC 38th Annual Woman of Achievement Winners

The Women of Achievement awards were created to recognize outstanding women in various fields throughout New Jersey. They are sponsored by the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Club (NJSFWC) of GFWC and Douglass Residential College of Rutgers, The State University, Winners were honored at an awards ceremony at the 125th NJSFWC Annual Convention.

To be eligible for this honor, each nominee must be a woman who has gained visibility in New Jersey for her contributions, including professional/personal accomplishments, activities and achievements. The following are the recipients for 2019:

Rosemarie L. D'Alessandro, who is the Founder and President of the Joan Angela D'Alessandro Foundation and lives in Hillsdale, NJ. In 1973, Rosemarie's seven-year old daughter, Joan, was delivering Girl Scout cookies to her neighbor and never returned home. A few days later, on Easter Sunday, her body was found in Harriman State Park. Her murderer was a teacher at a local high school. She had been sexually assaulted and killed in his home, three houses away. He was convicted and received 14 years to life, but after 14 years would be eligible for parole. When her daughter's killer became eligible for parole 20 years after the murder, Rosemarie worked with legislators and campaigned for a law to guarantee that killers of children remain in prison, now known as Joan's Law. Those laws went into effect in New York, New Jersey and on a national level, thanks to Rosemarie's efforts. Since then she has continued to work for victim's rights and most recently saw Joan's Law extended to include crimes with victims up to age 18.

Rosemarie and her two sons set up the Joan Angela D'Alessandro Foundation. The mission is to promote child safety, protection of children at risk and to promote victim's rights. The foundation also provides fun and educational activities for disadvantaged children. Rosemarie established a garden in the center of Hillsdale a few years ago, and a Child Safety Forever Fountain to commemorate the 45th anniversary of Joan's passing has been added. It is a place to meditate and bring awareness to child safety.

In September, the Foundation that Rosemarie founded held its fourth Child Safety Fun Fest. More than 100 people attended. The purpose of the event was to educate the guests on child safety, domestic violence, sexual assault and cyber crimes. Throughout the years Rosemarie has always consulted and comforted victims of crime and abuse.

Rosemarie was nominated by Elaine M. Mooney, Greater Pascack Valley Woman's Club.

Tina B. Gordon, is a retired Executive Director of Corporate Communications for Johnson & Johnson and Volunteer Vice President of Marketing & Communications Associate Alumnae of Douglass College and resides in Somerset, NJ.

Tina was the director of corporate communications for Johnson & Johnson, the multinational health care products company in New Brunswick. After graduating from Douglass College, she joined Johnson & Johnson as a writer. During her 34 year tenure, Tina assumed responsibility for

executive presentations, working closely with the Chairman of the Board and other top officials on speeches for major events. Tina was with Johnson & Johnson during the Tylenol Crises of 1982 and 1986. During this crucial time she helped develop and disseminate information to employees on crisis-related events and monitored media coverage of the company's activities.

Tina also made time to help the Certified Health Aides of Somerset County, Inc., now known as the Community Visiting Nurse Association. She has served on their Board of Directors as Vice President, Secretary and President. Her fundraising efforts and leadership have helped provide in-home care to the elderly, ill and disabled.

For more than two decades, Tina has served the Associate Alumnae of Douglass College (AADC) as an alumnae leader engaging countless alumnae in events, programs and initiatives. Tina served as Class President and Alumnae Council Representative. She served on the Board of Directors as Vice President of Communications, Board Secretary, two terms as President, Treasurer and currently Vice President for Marketing and Communications. She has participated in various capacities on several committees. Tina was an active participant in the "Save Douglass College" campaigns, advocating for the Associate Alumnae and Douglass.

For her invaluable support, Tina was recognized with the Alumnae Recognition Award and the Margaret T. Corwin Award, the AADC's highest award. For her significant contributions to the marketing and communications industry, she was recognized with a Tribute to Women & Industry Award presented by the YWCA.

Tina was nominated by Valerie L. Anderson, Associate Alumnae of Douglass College, Executive Director.

Marci Hopkins, who resides in Wyckoff, NJ, is the creator and host of a weekly morning talk show "Wake Up with Marci", which airs on You Too America (Cable TV). The show reaches out to New Jersey residents and to a national audience promoting self-improvement and tackles important topics including mental illness, domestic violence, divorce, addiction, trauma, spirituality and more. She shares her hardships, healing, triumphs, information on how to break stigmas, where to find resources and breaking the cycle of shame. She develops programming that makes a difference, including one show which helped to open a battered woman's shelter for ACCESS Family Services in Essex.

The show is a passion for Marci who is three years sober after winning her battle with alcoholism and is a survivor of sexual abuse. She's committed to providing not only hope for women, but also resources to empower them to get help overcoming numerous struggles. Marci previously hosted the popular web-based talk show "Coffee with Marci" which spotlighted local businesses and organizations and provided resources for the Wyckoff community. Marci has been featured on CBS New York, PEOPLE en Espanol; Latina Magazine, 201 Magazine, News 12 NJ and other leading outlets.

When Marci is not hosting her show, the mother-of-two devotes much of her time giving back to her community. She has helped raise awareness and funds for the Bergen County Food Bank, YMCA Gala fundraiser, SWS organization and she helped bring awareness to mental illness and

addiction at the Spring Lake toy fundraiser. She raised money for children and families in New Jersey, as well as the Kumali Orphanage in Uganda, Africa. Marci volunteers with Julia's Butterfly Foundation and leads chair yoga and reading activities at the Christian Health Center.

Marci was nominated by Mary Lu Henry of the North Arlington Woman's Club.

Evelyn Spath-Mercado, who resides in Rutherford, NJ, is the President of HK International, a corporation involving growing, manufacturing and distribution of various agricultural grain products. During this tenure, she was a driving force behind the original NYC Food Bank. Evelyn received her first achievement at the age of thirteen when she was recognized as an outstanding leader and representative of young teenagers for the Future Women of America.

Evelyn is the chairperson of the Bergen County Agricultural Development Board, an effort that has led to the preservation of eight working farms in the past 13 years, resulting in hundreds of New Jersey acres that will forever remain true to the Garden State.

Evelyn became the first female in aviation history to obtain a position as aircraft manager with Trans World Airlines (TWA) at JFK airport controlling all international and domestic departures. She helped the company by improving operations involving aircraft design and international policy. As Director of the Customer Service Program for TWA, she supported the development of equal rights for women. She was selected to the Advisory Construction Committee of TWA Executives for the new construction of a 5-star hotel and re-creation of a historical landmark terminal at Kennedy Airport.

Evelyn served as vice president and founding group chairperson of the Williams Carlos Williams Center for the Performing Arts for 37 years. She continues to work for the preservation of the historic theater by raising thousands of dollars to keep the center active for the community. Evelyn spearheaded the preparation of the Bergen County Historic Preservation Grant Fund application for the restoration of the historic 125 year-old Woman's Club of Rutherford Clubhouse which resulted in the inclusion of the historic building on the National and New Jersey State Register of Historic Places.

Evelyn was nominated by Jacquelyn Reformato, Woman's Club of Rutherford.

The NJSFWC, founded in 1894, has its Headquarters on the Douglass Residential Campus, in New Brunswick. The college, formerly Douglass College, established by the NJSFWC in 1918. To learn more about the NJSFWC and membership in a local club, visit www.NJSFWC.org or call (732) 249-5474. For more information regarding the General Federation of Women's Clubs, contact www.GFWC.org. Opportunities are provided for women in education, leadership training, and community service projects through participation in local clubs, enabling members "to make a difference in the lives of others, one project at a time."

To learn about the NJSFWC, visit the Federation website at www.njsfwc.org or call (732) 249-5474/5485.