



Congressman John Garamendi's

- Women Leading the Way-

2017 WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

"It is the undeniable strength in women, a strength borne of compassion and not force that has brought so many of you here today. Each and every one of you has a heart of service. Your life as a mother, counselor, teacher, business woman is a testament to that fact"

Patricia Garamendi

Dear Women Leaders,

It is my honor to welcome you to our 2017 Women of the Year awards. The honorees today represent some of the most outstanding and dedicated women in the 3rd Congressional District. Nominated by their peers, these women and the leadership they have provided are being recognized for playing an integral and crucial role in improving the lives of everyone in their communities.

During the last 50 years women have made great strides in America. It used to be almost unheard of to see women as elected officials, CEOs, senior military officials, doctors or attorneys, but today some of our most successful leaders in the world are women. This progress has not come easy and many women before you have worked hard and strived to achieve the independence and rights you have today. I realize there is more work to be done to ensure that women have equal pay, flexible work schedules and affordable education. Each of the honorees will be a vital part of the future successes for women. I am inspired by each one of you here today and firmly believe when Women succeed, America succeeds!

Congratulations,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Garamendi".

Congressman John Garamendi

Sheila Allen

*Executive Director, Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance
Davis – Yolo County*

Sheila Allen is a proven leader in the community and embodies the qualities of a true public servant. Sheila is currently the Executive Director of the Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance. She has been instrumental in building an organization that serves as a vital voice for older adults in Yolo County and elected officials and community leaders consider her the expert in addressing senior issues. Sheila is credited with organizing the 2010 Aging Summit that recognized the need for sustained attention of older adults. Her leadership has enhanced the lives of countless older adults in Yolo County through educational programs, collaboration with over 80 providers of older adult services and is a faithful advocate for needed programs and services at every level of government.

Working alongside County Supervisor Provenza, Sheila was instrumental in helping to advocate for a new Adult Day Health Care Center in Woodland as well as a Memory Center in Davis. Sheila also advocated for legislation to protect seniors from abuse and provide greater access to services in the community. She is currently working on a similar project in Winters, California.

Sheila's community involvement includes, Trustee, Davis Unified School District, Board Member, First Five Yolo, Board of Director, Explorit Science Center, Board of Governors, Agency on Aging, Board of Directors, American Nurses Association, Board of Director, Golden State Nursing Foundation, Advisory Committee, Yolo County Home Supportive Services, Member, Yolo County Health Council, Member, City of Davis Human Relations Commission, and Advisory Committee, Unitrans. Sheila holds a B.S in Nursing from University of Wisconsin, Masters and a PhD in Nursing from University of San Francisco.

Nominated by Supervisor Jim Provenza and Fran Smith

Barbara Beckworth

Business Owner & Community Leader

Dixon – Solano County

Barbara Beckworth is a community activist and small business owner with a heart of service and a strong desire to help others. She has been involved in nearly every organization and club in the Dixon area and has served in many leadership roles.

Barbara's commitment and love for her community as a leader is reflected by her involvement in several committees and organizations. She was past Chair and Member of the Governmental Affairs Committee where she continues to moderate the candidate's forums, she sits on several scholarship committees for the students at Dixon High School, and she's also served as past president for the Dixon Chamber of Commerce and Dixon Downtown Business Association. Her desire to make Dixon a better place didn't stop there, she also is past president of Lambtown USA and is involved every year in the annual Dixon May Fair Parade.

Barbara is a true civic leader. There are many words to describe Barbara: graceful, elegant, beautiful, but most of all she is simply the nicest person one would ever meet. She was honored with the Dixon Citizen of the Year in 1989 and is considered an icon in Dixon who is loved by all who know her. Barbara is also known for her beloved dress shop that was in Downtown Dixon for many years.

Nominated by Carol Pruett, Jack & Mary Lou Batchelor

Michele Blake

Executive Director, Sutter County Children and Families Commission

Yuba City – Sutter County

Michele Blake is a proven leader in the community with a strong desire to make a difference. Michele currently serves as the Executive Director of the Sutter County Children and Families Commission, also known as First 5 Sutter.

Michele has been a strong advocate and was instrumental in making positive changes in her role as executive director. She is responsible for ensuring children ages 0-5 reach their full potential by administering and coordinating community programs and activities that have a positive effect on their development. She has collaborated with Friends of the Sutter Library to implement a program which delivers books directly to preschool children's homes to increase literacy awareness; she has worked with the Sutter Sheriff's Department to implement a children's lifejacket loaner program which increases water safety; and working alongside healthcare clinics, she was instrumental in implementing breastfeeding friendly practices in existing Commission programs. Michele is also a strong advocate for Mother's Against Drunk Drivers and, together with her family, established the Nicole Bull Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Michele's experience includes her previous work as the Health Education Director and Public Information Officer at the Sutter County Public Health Department where she planned, created, budgeted, developed, and implemented comprehensive health education programs and was instrumental in securing federal funding to develop IGNITE Yuba City, a program to help people make healthy choices.

Michele continues to support the Yuba Sutter community and as a single mom finds time to contribute to the activities of her 8 and 12-year-old children.

Nominated by Julie Price and Jim Whiteaker, Chair Sutter County Board of Supervisors

Tranine Chisom

Caminar, Supported Housing Manager

Fairfield – Solano County

Ms. Tranine Chisom has dedicated her career to community service and improving support for people with mental health disabilities and those who experience housing challenges and homelessness. As the Director of Supported Housing of Caminar in Solano County, Tranine has tirelessly worked with property owners, and city and county officials to increase and leverage affordable housing resources for our most vulnerable citizens. Annually, Tranine and her team provide supportive housing services to over 100 residents who might not otherwise be able to obtain or maintain affordable housing on their own.

Ms. Chisom also serves as the Board Chairwoman for Housing First Solano, a coalition of service providers in Solano County working together to end homelessness. She has been instrumental in the development and now the implementation of Solano County's Neighbors Helping Neighbor-Forward Together 5-Year Strategic Plan to address homelessness.

Tranine is also active in the Solano Napa Habitat for Humanity program where she actively participates as a crew member on community building days, as well as serves on the Family Selection Committee to identify families most in need of a Habitat Home.

Nominated by Christopher Kughn, Caminar, Executive Director

Barbara Cotter

Community Leader

Yuba City – Sutter County

Barbara (Babs) Cotter exemplifies the qualities of selfless service and possesses a deep desire to help others in the community.

Barbara Cotter, a retired educator dedicated her entire career doing what she loved best; making a difference in the lives of elementary school children. Her career spanned over a period of 38 years; 33 in the Yuba City Unified School District. As an elementary school teacher, she was inspiring, beloved, and revered by her students and fellow teachers alike.

In 1986, after surviving a life threatening medical diagnosis, she had an overwhelming desire to give back to a community that helped her through her recovery. She became a Reach to Recover coordinator, and eventually a board member for the American Cancer Society. Barbara's heart of service didn't stop there, she also volunteered for the Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County, the State Convention Planning Board for Philanthropic Educational Organization, Middle Mountain Foundation, and Girls on the Run.

In 2009, Barbara Cotter was honored with the Caroline S. Ringler Perpetual Service Award for outstanding service to the Museum and has been appointed to a lifetime position on the Museum Commission.

Nominated by Julie Stark and Jessica Hougen

Ronda DaRosa

Deputy Superintendent, Yolo County Office of Education

Woodland – Yolo County

Dr. Rhonda DaRosa has dedicated her 33-year career to Education. Her broad educational experience includes 12 years of private and public classroom instruction at the intermediate to adult education levels, 21 years in an administrative role at schools and county office levels implementing programs focused on alternative and special education, developing curriculum for college preparatory and career technical programs, designing and implementing professional development opportunities for K-12 teachers and administrators, and facilitating school reform at the secondary and middle school levels.

Dr. DaRosa currently serves as the Deputy Superintendent for the Yolo County Office of Education; a position that is well deserved. In her capacity as an administrator, she is committed to providing quality education and delivers a wide range of services to the children, parents and K-12 school districts in Yolo County.

Dr. DaRosa holds credentials in the areas of Life Sciences, Introductory Mathematics, Language Development Specialist and Educational Administration. She received her master's degree in educational administration from Sonoma State University and her doctoral degree in educational leadership from the University of Southern California.

Nominated by Jesse Ortiz, Superintendent of Schools, Yolo County

Robin Dewey

President, Team Davis

Davis – Yolo County

Ms. Robin Dewey is a dedicated advocate for individuals living with disabilities and is committed to serving her community. As President of Team Davis, a nonprofit organization established to help enrich the lives of children and adults with developmental, cognitive, and physical disabilities, Ms. Dewey has demonstrated her devotion to an underserved community. Thanks to her dedication, people with disabilities have been provided opportunities for experiences that give them a sense of accomplishment, purpose, and belonging. Ms. Dewey has brought to life the mission of her organization, helping disabled individuals build physical skills, a sense of camaraderie, and a stronger connection with the Davis community.

For decades Ms. Dewey has served her community by advocating for equity, social justice, and opportunity for disabled individuals. Not only does she serve a typically isolated community with compassion, consistency, and authenticity, but she also ensures that her volunteers do the same. Ms. Dewey's service to her community does not end with the disabled people she helps, but continues with the compassionate service she teaches to everyone in her organization.

Nominated by Gloria Partida

Baljinder Dhillon

Sutter County Superintendent of Schools

Yuba City – Sutter County

Dr. Baljinder Dhillon has dedicated her life to education. She currently serves as the Sutter County Superintendent of Schools. Her career began as a fifth-grade teacher at Tierra Buena Elementary School in the Yuba City Unified School District. After earning her master's degree she moved into administration, serving as the assistant principal at Tierra Buena and Barry elementary schools. She later became the principal at Rio Del Oro Elementary in the Plumas Lake Elementary School District.

Dr. Dhillon is dedicated to finding ways to fund programs that benefit teachers, staff and students. She is credited with authorizing cost-saving measures for the Sutter County Superintendent of Schools office by becoming more energy efficient, she's authored proposals to fund the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Grant and partnered with the four county offices for the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence Early Adopter Grant application.

Dr. Dhillon received her Bachelor of Arts degree, Masters of Education degree in Education leadership and a Doctorate of Education from California State University, Sacramento. She was recognized by the California Superintendents Educational Services Association as Spotlight Leader for November 2016. Dr. Dhillon was also honored for her dedication and commitment by the Sikh Temple Gurdwara of Yuba City at their 37th Annual Nagar Kirtan Sikh Parade.

Nominated by Barbara LeVake and Jaswant Bains

Anna Eaton

Executive Director, Vacaville Neighborhood Boys and Girls Club

Vacaville – Solano County

Ms. Anna Eaton exemplifies the qualities of selfless service and possesses a passion for serving our youth. Since 2013, Anna has distinguished herself as the Executive Director of the Vacaville Neighborhood Boys & Girls Club where she helps provide a safe and caring place for youth to learn and grow. During her tenure, she has expanded the program to five sites and significantly enhanced the club's focus on support and mentorship of the members as they are prepared for future life success.

Ms. Eaton was also founder of Starbound Theatre, a recreation based youth program, helping to bring the joyful experience of theatre to the at-risk and diverse youth of Fairfield, Vacaville, American Canyon, Dixon, and Napa. Ms. Eaton also serves in shaping strategic groups within Vacaville Unified School District to address future programs and curriculum, as well as be the catalyst for three youth summits for teens in the Will C. Wood Interact Club. Anna also serves on the Board of Directors for the Vacaville Rotary Club as the Youth Services Director and advisor to the Will C. Wood High School Interact Club.

Anna was born in Vietnam and came to America as a young child with her family as they escaped from Saigon as the United States Forces withdrew. She is a proud mother of four and proud American who dedicates her life to giving back to the country that has afforded her so many opportunities. “Life is more meaningful when we evolve into a purpose greater than ourselves.”

Nominated by Vacaville Police Chief, Chief John Carli

Laurie Goodman

Superintendent/Principal, Winship-Robbins Elementary School District

Meridian – Sutter County

Dr. Laurie Goodman has dedicated herself to the education, health, and safety of children. As Superintendent and Principal of the Winship-Robbins Elementary School District, Dr. Goodman has worked to implement many programs designed to serve children in need. In partnership with Sutter County Public Health, she has implemented a nutrition education and obesity prevention program which aims to promote healthy eating and exercise habits in youth.

Dr. Goodman was also an instrumental partner in the effort to establish the “Food For Thought” pilot project which works to minimize child hunger by providing families with healthy foods to take home over the weekend. Her efforts on behalf of these programs make a clear positive impact in the lives of children in her community.

Dr. Goodman’s passion and commitment to the students and families of Winship-Robbins Elementary School goes beyond academic success. Dr. Goodman is truly dedicated to the complete health and wellbeing of each and every one of her students and never passes up an opportunity to provide them with any help they may need.

Nominated by Aman Purewal and Pang Vang

Barbara Graham

Community Leader

Vacaville – Solano County

Mrs. Barbara Graham exemplifies the qualities of selfless service and boundless giving of herself to the betterment of others. A woman of great faith, Barbara has been a pillar of the Vacaville community for many years. In the late 80's, she with husband and co-pastor, Willie Graham, founded the Christian Body Life Church in Vacaville where she serves and has served as Sunday School Teacher, Preacher, Choir member, Head of the Women's Department, and servant to any needy family of the congregation.

In 1999, Mrs. Graham answered the call to assist the Vacaville Police Department establish a resource for to assist victims of domestic violence. This program provides food, clothing, counseling, and many other free referral services in collaboration with city and county services. Since 2013, Barbara has also served as the Chapel Coordinator for David Grant Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base where she oversees hospitality and all aspects of daily operation and church services.

Barbara is a Board Member of Safe Quest Solano, a domestic violence shelter for women and their children, and was also integral to establishing the Supervised Visiting Care Program in collaboration with the Solano County Courts to provide safe spaces for troubled families to have visitations and promote positive joint custody child exchanges.

Nominated by Dr. Rose Burton

Judith Holzapfel

President, Glenn County Board of Education

Orland – Glenn County

Mrs. Judith Holzapfel's leadership and civic spirit has no bounds. Her service to country and community began when she enlisted in the United States Air Force after having graduated from Marquette University with a degree in nursing. Following basic training, Judith was stationed at Beale Air Force Base where she met her husband. Following the birth of her son, she began her civilian career working in area hospitals.

After pursuing further education, Mrs. Holzapfel eventually became Glenn County's school nurse and continued in that role for the next 30 years. Her many years of work and dedication has made a difference in health education and quality of life for thousands of students and their families.

After retiring from her many years of service to Glenn County, Mrs. Holzapfel decided to continue her public services. She ran for a position on the Glenn County Board of Education, and won by an overwhelming majority.

Mrs. Holzapfel is an active member of many community service organizations throughout the county and devotes her time to helping youth, veterans, and the impoverished. Above all, as a mother, grandmother, community activist, and veteran; Mrs. Holzapfel is passionate and dedicated to upholding the values of her family, and of her country.

Nominated by Christine Stifter, Salina Edwards, and Lisa Morgan

Christine Ivory

Board of Directors, Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau

Live Oak – Sutter County

Ms. Christine Ivory has dedicated herself to serving her community by advocating for its agricultural industry. After serving on the Board of Directors for the Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau for six years, she is to become its President. She has immersed herself in the issues of the agricultural community by serving on eleven of the farm bureau's committees. In her work at the Yuba Sutter Farm Bureau, Ms. Ivory takes particular pride in educating youth on the importance of agriculture. She has been instrumental in maintaining and growing her community's agriculture education programs, such as FFA and 4-H.

Ms. Ivory is also committed to the preservation of agricultural lands and serves in many organizations working towards this goal. She dedicates her time to many community organizations providing for economic development and community improvement. Through her extensive involvement in the agricultural industry and many service organizations, Ms. Ivory has demonstrated that she is invested in the Yuba and Sutter county communities.

Nominated by Jessica DeCoito and Laurie Johnson

Lynn Jewell

Community and Veterans Service

Vacaville – Solano County

Mrs. Lynn Jewell has been a vibrant servant of our community since coming from San Antonio, Texas as one of three young daughters of an Air Force Veteran. As a youth, Lynn was active in the Girl Scouts, church groups, and the Fairfield High School Scarlet Brigade Band before graduating from California State University, Sacramento with honors. After marrying Jeff Jewell, her service member husband, Lynn became active in supporting multiple local Veteran's Groups.

Mrs. Jewell served as President of the Vacaville American Legion Auxiliary, Secretary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, and served at the Vacaville Veterans' Memorial Hall as secretary, treasurer, Bingo volunteer, and co-chair of the Annual Holiday Dinners for over 20 years.

In 2006, Lynn became involved in the North Bay Homeless Veterans Standdown writing grants, raising funds, and serving as volunteer coordinator. Her passionate commitment to this program grew and she now serves alongside her husband on the Standdown Board of Directors. Lynn is the driving force of the North Bay Standdown and most everyone would say that without Lynn, the years of providing supportive services to our homeless veterans in the form of a “hand-up, not a hand-out” would not have happened.

Nominated by Jeff Jewell and John Evalle

Jeannie C. Klever

*Community Activist and Public Servant
Sutter County*

Jeannie Klever has called Sutter County home for the past 27 years where she has an extensive record of service. Jeannie embodies the qualities of a community activists and public servant and we're proud to honor her today. Growing up in the 60's, Jeannie experienced a mixture of gender and racial inequalities which influenced and shaped her career choices. Her activism began at an early age when during school she protested an end to the Vietnam War. She also advocated for more on-site tutors for students of color and when met with opposition, Jeannie volunteered as a tutor through the rest of her school years. She strongly believes education was and remains the path out of poverty.

Jeannie's desire to help families with special needs children was due to the challenges her family endured after her brother was diagnosed with severe autism. She operated a Family Resource Center that delivered support services and resources to families of low income and special needs adults and children. She taught self-advocacy for the local school's individualized education programs and medical service needs students.

Jeannie's community and public service involvement is extensive. Jeannie has been a member of and continues to support several nonprofit organizations. For the past 15 years, she has sponsored an annual Art Contest for Sutter Union High School students. In 2008, Jeannie joined the local democratic party's central committee as a way to increase community engagement where she served three terms. In 2013, Jeannie joined the U.S House of Representatives as my district representative serving Yuba and Sutter counties until her recent retirement.

Jeannie continues to volunteer in the community and helps families in need when she can. Jeannie has learned to appreciate the art culture and enjoys mixed media arts as a way to relax. She and her husband Dale are enjoying family time with their children and two grandchildren.

Nominated by Debbi Gibbs

Sakari Lyons

Women's Advocate

Solano County

Sakari Lyons is a strong advocate for women in Solano County as a Fellow with the Essie Justice Center. A social worker by profession, Sakari embodies the qualities and the desire to advocate for women and families in need of compassion, empathy and guidance due to the incarceration of their loved one.

Inspired by her own situation, Sakari worked full time for Health and Social Services providing resources to children and families when she joined the Essie Justice Center. Through the organizations Healing to Advocacy program, Sakari has helped many women find strength to heal from their wounds through guidance, compassion and faith. She empowers and encourages them to be advocates for themselves and their children.

As a single parent of three children, Sakari was able to pursue her education and holds both a B.A and M.S degree.

Nominated by Rosalind Young-Reid

Becky Marigo

Program Supervisor, Davis Community Meals and Housing

Davis – Yolo County

Ms. Becky Marigo is committed to serving her community and has a clear passion for helping those who are truly in need. Through her work as a program supervisor and case manager at Davis Community Meals and Housing, Ms. Marigo helps homeless individuals find permanent housing. She coordinates with government agencies, private businesses, and charitable organizations in order to provide resources and opportunities to homeless individuals in her community. Her work has helped many individuals to move beyond homelessness and find work providing for themselves.

In Ms. Marigo's work with Davis Community Meals and Housing, she not only addresses the need of a whole community, she also works ensures that she meets the needs of the individual. With every person she serves, Ms. Marigo treats them with dignity, compassion, and respect. She has a talent for connecting with isolated individuals and helping them find comfort in their community. Once Ms. Marigo makes a connection with someone, she sees them through to success, ensuring that they have support every step of the way. Ms. Marigo's work helping those in need is a great inspiration and exemplifies what it means to serve your community.

Nominated by Julie Jenkins and Harmony Scopazzi

Kate Mellon-Anibaba

Community Activist

Davis– Yolo County

Ms. Kate Mellon-Anibaba has made it her mission to bring people together in the name of tolerance and spread support for marginalized groups within her community. Following this year's attacks on Muslim communities throughout California, Ms. Mellon-Anibaba organized an event she called a "Statement of Love." Her idea was to bring people together to show their support for Muslims in her community. In response to the hateful words and actions she saw directed at certain minorities, Ms. Mellon Anibaba created her own demonstration of support, solidarity, and acceptance. She was determined to make a positive impact in her community, and she succeeded. Following a particularly disturbing attack on the Islamic Center right in her own community, she brought together over 1,000 people to show their support for their neighbors. She helped raise tens of thousands of dollars to help pay for repairs to businesses and places of worship targeted by hate-driven vandalism. Ms. Mellon-Anibaba brought people together to show their support, tolerance, and acceptance of a marginalized community within their community. Her message of peace, tolerance, and support has spread to surrounding communities and inspired similar demonstrations of solidarity. Her determination to bring her community together in the face of hatred is inspirational.

Nominated by Jill Crowley

Miriam Miller

Lifelong Community Servant

Woodland – Yolo County

Ms. Miriam Miller has spent many years serving her community of Woodland, and she will tell you that she loves volunteering. In years past, Ms. Miller has worked to revitalize the Woodland Downtown area through a program called “Main Street” and helped facilitate renovations to the Woodland Opera House State Historic Park. While working to bring Woodland’s facilities into the future, she also worked to ensure her community never lost sight of its history. Ms. Miller was instrumental in the running of the Yolo County Historical Museum, worked as a docent at the museum and historical Opera House, helped others research their own history, and to this day still helps put out the Woodland Historical Society newsletter. If there was an opportunity to serve the Woodland community, Miriam Miller seized it.

Ms. Miller’s service and volunteerism was not limited to her community of Woodland. She traveled the world with her husband as he served in the U.S. Navy and State Department, supporting him and caring for her family. During World War II, Ms. Miller became very aware of the injustice of Japanese internment camps, leading her to live a life in support of immigrants and social justice. Ms. Miller has housed refugees in her home and made them a part of her family. She continues to fight for immigrant and refugee rights. Ms. Miller is dedicated to the betterment of her community, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Nominated by Peggy Seidel and Mark Atherton

Rita Montes Martin

*Public Servant and Community Leader
Davis – Yolo County*

Rita Montes Martin is a lifelong entrepreneur and community activist in the Davis community. At 95, she's led an extraordinary life and has no desire to retire. She embodies the true meaning of public servant and community activist.

Rita is an iconic personality in the Davis community, having developed many relationships with community organizers, business leaders and elected officials; you will always find her advocating for a local initiative or even take on a national policy. If it's good for the community then Rita will be involved. Rita is also active with Davis Media Access, a media company focused on education programming as a way of strengthening community.

Rita has worn many hats, but the preponderance of her career has been in real estate. She was a loan officer and the only female appraiser for Great Western, as well as other financial institutions, and worked closely with builders and developers throughout her career. She held a leadership position as executive vice president, property management of Pegasus group.

Rita has several irons in the fire, a serial entrepreneur and problem solver, Rita is also involved in political activism and is considered an author, screen play writer and friend to many in the Davis community.

Nominated by Debbi Gibbs

Catherine Morris

Pastor, Dixon United Methodist Church

Dixon – Solano County

Ms. Catherine Morris has dedicated her 30 years in Dixon to serving her community. As the pastor of the Dixon United Methodist Church, she has had countless opportunities to serve her congregation as well as the community as a whole. Outside of her role as pastor, her passion has been serving the youth of the Dixon community. Through her work with Dixon Family Services, Dixon Advocates for Children, and the Safe Schools Task Force, Ms. Morris works to keep the youth in her community safe and provide them with opportunities for success.

Ms. Morris' leadership also extends to Dixon's senior communities. She is an advocate for securing affordable senior housing and adequate senior transportation services. Her support for senior programs in her community is ongoing, and she regularly assists seniors in finding the programs and services which can best serve their needs.

Ms. Morris is a devoted servant to the people of Dixon. Anyone who knows her will tell you that her generous spirit, endless energy, and genuine warmth make her a beloved and respected member of the Dixon community.

Nominated by Jack and Mary Lou Batchelor

Sharon Phippens

Community Activist

Orland – Glenn County

Ms. Sharon Phippens has led an exciting, dynamic life, never straying from a desire to serve. The wife of a Foreign Service Officer, Ms. Phippens travelled the world and adapted to unknown situations, all in service to her country and her family. Ms. Phippens was a first-hand witness of some of our country's most interesting history through her work for two American embassies and her service in the United States Justice Department during President Nixon's resignation.

Ms. Phippens later pursued an extensive and varied education which she has put to use serving her community. Ms. Phippens has worked in law enforcement, patient advocacy, education, and social work; all fields which allowed her to work serving others. In every role, Ms. Phippens distinguished herself as someone who would go above and beyond. She has also served on the boards of organizations that provide support to people in times of need. Ms. Phippens has used her many talents to the benefit of her community, lending her skills to a wide variety of fields.

Nominated by Carolyn Denton

Christine Ponce

First Female Rice Miller

Woodland – Yolo County

Ms. Christine Ponce has dedicated 27 years to California’s agricultural industry. She has worked cultivating many crops, ultimately becoming California’s first female rice miller. In that role she managed many facets of rice production, ensuring that the plant operated at full capacity. In her 27 year career she overcame many challenges—from low wages to serious injury—and inspired many women that they too could pursue a career once considered only for men.

A proud descendent of a Bracero, Ms. Ponce has strong ties to the California agricultural community. In her time as a rice miller she helped advocate for the rights of agricultural workers by serving the local chapter of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. In addition to working long, demanding hours, she took time to serve as a secretary for the ILWU Local 150. Ms. Ponce’s long and distinguished career has demonstrated her devotion to California’s vibrant agricultural community.

Nominated by Izabelle Ponce

Kathleen Ramos

Community Leader
Vacaville – Solano County

Kathleen Ramos has been a vibrant leader in the community since arriving in Vacaville with her young family in 1986. She quickly fell in love with the charm, generosity and spirit of Vacaville and immediately decided she would devote her time and talent to making Vacaville a great place to raise a family.

Kathleen's passion to help others is evident through her community and public service. Throughout her two decades as a top realtor for Solano County, she's helped countless families find the home of their dreams. Her desire to help the community didn't stop there; Kathleen has held leadership roles in thirteen boards and commissions, including serving five consecutive terms as president and past vice-chair on the Community Services Commission for the City of Vacaville. She also volunteers in student education programs, was past president for the Solano Community Symphony League and is a Charter Member for 100 Women Who Care About Solano County and the Vacaville Soroptimists Twilight Club.

Kathleen is married to her husband Steve, together they have three adult children and six granddaughters. She enjoys an active lifestyle and when she's not helping in the community you can find her on the bike trails or racquetball courts.

Nominated by Christina Baird

Jody Samons

Community Development Director, Glenn County

Willows – Glenn County

Ms. Jody Samons has dedicated over 37 years to serving her community of Glenn County. She has touched the lives of countless people through her work and volunteer activities. In her current position as Glenn County's Community Development Director, Ms. Samons has secured over \$200,000 in grants and worked with numerous companies to create over 200 new jobs in the area. Her overwhelming success in this role has had, and will continue to have, an undeniably positive impact on her community.

In her volunteer capacities, Ms. Samons has worked to support the youth of her community by creating opportunities and guiding them to success. Ms. Samons was instrumental in the creation of the Orland High School Booster club which helped support youth athletic programs in her community. She has also spent many years supporting youth in FFA or 4-H programs in any way she could. Ms. Samons served for many years on the Glenn County Junior Livestock Auction Committee and went on to found a non-profit organization to support the program when its future was in jeopardy. She also served for 7 years on the Glenn County Fair Board and worked tirelessly to ensure its continued success. Ms. Samons has spent many years supporting the youth in her community and never passed up an opportunity to help out.

Nominated by Christine Zoppi and Supervisor Vince Minto

Jaswinder Sandhu

Public Servant , Community Organizer

Sutter County

Jaswinder Sandhu has spent her career focused on improving the lives of people in her community. At a young age, she joined her farmworker parents in the fields to earn extra money during the summer. It was during those times that she realized the plight of the poor and became determined to make a difference.

Jaswinder's passion to help others has always been her priority. Having left a job in the private sector in 2003, she began her career as Site Manager for Mahal Plaza, a low income multi-family farm labor complex in Yuba City. Since then, she's been credited with securing \$313,000 in grant funding to build a safe passage route for children from Mahal Plaza as they walk to school. She also implemented several community programs and services at the property, including a community garden, day care, and ESL and exercise classes. She also offers Mahal as a venue for community gatherings such as the annual National Night Out, which is one of the most largely attended community events in Yuba City.

A testament to Jaswinder's commitment to the community and her excellence in property management; she was honored as Site Manager of the Year for Farm Labor Housing for the State of California. In 2011 and 2014 Jaswinder was presented with the national award for excellence in Washington, DC.

Nominated by Debbi Gibbs

Susan Schwartz

Community Servant & Volunteer

Vacaville – Solano County

Ms. Susan Schwartz is passionate about helping; helping young people grow, helping small businesses prosper, and helping in the community. Susan is known as the “volunteer extraordinaire” at the Vacaville Neighborhood Boys and Girls Club where she lives by the motto “children don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care”. Her genuine concern for the club youth is evident in everything she does which earned her recognition as the organization’s 2013 Volunteer of the Year and the 2016 Champions for Children Award by the Solano Kids Insurance Program.

Ms. Schwartz has launched multiple projects at the club to include the Holiday Give Back for toys and donations for the needy, as well as the Garden Project that helps teach, grow, prepare, and consume meals from grown for themselves as well as the needy and homeless.

Susan has taken her advocacy for children, and expanded it into the community by working as the driving force in a group to bring the Miss Representation Project to Solano County. Partnering with the Kroc Center and Brenden Theater, she helped sponsor the showing of the films The Miss Representation Project and The Mask You Live In. Ms. Schwartz’s commitment to service has brought these films that raise awareness of gender stereotypes, and help young people better understand the issues we all face to over three hundred children and their parents.

Nominated by Christina Baird

Susan Scott

Board of Trustees, Marysville Joint Unified School District

Marysville – Yuba County

Ms. Susan Scott has dedicated her life to helping children. In her 26 years of service to the Marysville Joint Unified School District, Ms. Scott performed many duties, from outreach, to attendance, to working as a school librarian. In every role, she demonstrated her devotion to children and their education. Ms. Scott has a strong understanding and appreciation of the role schools play in the growth and development of students.

In keeping with her dedication to her community's education system, Ms. Scott ran for a position on the Marysville Joint Unified School District Board of Trustees. She was elected by an overwhelming majority, becoming the first African American woman elected in Yuba County. Ms. Scott's community recognized her commitment to making a difference in the lives of children and voted to have her continue her work.

Ms. Scott's dedication to helping children does not stop at her workplace. She has fostered over 25 children in her home, helping to ensure that children have a safe and welcoming home in a time of need. Ms. Scott also sponsors a charitable program, "To Tanzania With Love," which provides financial assistance to an orphanage in Tanzania. Whether in her role as a foster parent, serving her community's education system, or supporting children in a developing nation, Ms. Scott has shown her devotion to the betterment of children's lives.

Nominated by Lonetta Riley and Zenobia Brokenbrough

Michalle Shown-Rodriguez

*Executive Director, Solano County Library Foundation
Fairfield – Solano County*

Michalle Shown-Rodriguez has dedicated her career to community service and is a pillar of the community. Michalle currently serves as the executive director of Solano County Library Foundation and brings 25 years of experience in development, grant writing and executive leadership.

Michalle's work with non-profits began with the birth of her son and subsequent involvement in co-founding a support organization in Idaho that served families with medically fragile children. She has been involved with the National Foster Parents Association, the Sierra Association of Foster Families and Ronald McDonald House Charities. Being an adoptive parent of four elementary school-age children, she had a passion to serve in an education-focused environment where she can have a direct impact on children and their parents.

Michalle's previous experience includes working for the Crisis Support Services of Alameda County where she was responsible for developing programs to support suicide prevention, crisis intervention and public education. Shown-Rodriguez holds a degree in social psychology and earned the Non-Profit Certificate at Stanford Graduate School of Business' Center for Social Innovation among other professional credentials.

Nominated by Christina Baird

Tracee Stacy

Founder and CEO, Prime Time Living Magazine

Vacaville – Solano County

Ms. Tracee Stacy is committed to serving her community and devotes her time to helping those who are most vulnerable. Ms. Stacy dedicates her time, talent, and expertise to improving the lives of seniors throughout Solano County. She works tirelessly to help particularly disadvantaged seniors facing disabilities, isolation, mental illness, and poverty. Ms. Stacy is an integral part of Solano County's ability to provide services to seniors in need, and her expertise is unparalleled. She is continuously working to make a positive difference for seniors in her community.

Ms. Stacy is generous, passionate, dedicated, and acts with integrity. She is full of empathy and a fierce advocate for those in need. Ms. Stacy has left an indelible mark on senior services of Solano County, having already dedicated nearly 20 years of service and advocacy to seniors, youth, and Solano County. The positive difference Ms. Stacy has made in her community cannot be overstated.

Nominated by Rochelle Sherlock and Supervisor John Vasquez

Brynda Stranix

*Public Servant and Community Leader
Yuba City – Sutter County*

Brynda Stranix is a pillar of the community who exemplifies the qualities of a true public servant. She is a proven leader who embodies a passion to help others. Brynda currently serves as President and Chief Operating Officer of the Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Corporation.

Brynda's passion to help the community thrive is reflected in her present and previous work experience in the field of economics. She joined the Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Corporation (YSEDC) in 2001 with 22 years of experience in administrative management, accounting and public relations. Since joining YSEDC, Brynda has worked tirelessly with local businesses as well as public and private community leaders to identify ways to improve and expand business in the area.

Brynda takes great pride in her community, she currently serves in eleven officer roles on boards and commissions for economic development, and is a member of twenty-nine various advisory committees who deal with critical issues from healthcare to homelessness and women's issues. When Brynda is not busy attending a meeting, you will always find her attending a community event.

Brynda was presented with the 2016 Athena Leadership Award for achieving the highest level of professional excellence for her contributions in improving the quality of life for others, especially women, in realizing their full potential. Brynda was born and raised in Yuba City and takes pride in raising three delightful grandsons.

Nominated by the Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Corporation and Debbi Gibbs

Renee Tadlock

*Community Servant and Role Model
Fairfield – Solano County*

Mrs. Renee Tadlock is the Operations Director of The Leaven, a faith-based afterschool tutoring and mentorship program focused on serving the underserved youth in our high-risk communities with educational assistance, physical play, nutrition, and character development. Before becoming the Operations Director, Renee was a Leaven Site Director and served to help grow the Leaven Organization from one center in 2009 to sixteen different locations throughout Solano and Napa Counties and three sites in Southern California with more scheduled to open soon.

Mrs. Tadlock's role at the Leaven has been vital to the organization's success and secondary positive impact of raising the quality of life within each neighbor served by a Leaven Center. Recognized by community leaders and law enforcement officials, Leaven Centers through their development of community relationships have proven over and over to positively impact crime rates, drive out negative influences, and empower residents to participate in neighborhood watch and re-vitalization programs.

Renee developed her passion for education and serving our youth during her prior service as a pre-school teacher in Fairfield and a substitute para-teacher for Solano County Office of Education. Renee and her husband, Mike, serve as Pastors at Real Life Church in Fairfield where she also serves as an inspiring role-model to the church, youth group, and community members.

Nominated by Mark Lillis

Louise Walker

*President and CEO, First Northern Bank
Dixon – Solano County*

Ms. Louise Walker has been a strong leader in her roles in both private and public organizations.

She consistently proves that she does not shy away from leadership roles. She is a valued partner of the Solano Economic Development Corporation and President and CEO of First Northern Bank. She serves as chairperson of the Solano EDC Board of Directors, and just completed her term as Chair of the California Bankers Association. Ms. Walker also serves on the national Board of Directors for the American Banker Association, making her the third woman to chair the association in the organizations 125 years.

Ms. Walker also lends her considerable leadership expertise to several nonprofit organizations. She serves on the boards for both Valley Vision and the Yolo Food Bank, is a former President of Soroptimist International of Dixon, and a member of the Dixon Rotary Club. With her extensive leadership experience and skills, as well as her commitment to serving her community, Ms. Walker is an outstanding role model for women of every age.

Nominated by Sandy Person

Amanda Walsh

Educator, Pioneer Elementary School

Davis – Yolo County

Ms. Amanda Walsh embodies the values of a great teacher, educator, and mentor, and displays unparalleled dedication to her work. For Ms. Walsh, teaching is not just a job, but a calling. As an educator at Pioneer Elementary school, she has a positive and lasting impact on the children she teaches every day. Ms. Walsh is dedicated to the overall wellbeing of all students, ensuring that they are safe, fed, and taken care of. She can frequently be found working late to keep parents up to date and involved in their children's education.

Beyond her work in the classroom, Ms. Walsh finds many ways to serve her community. Over the years, she has been actively involved with the Parent Teacher Association and coordinated fundraising efforts for local schools. Ms. Walsh has volunteered her time for the Davis Little League and Davis Legacy Soccer Club.

A mother of three boys, Amanda is always busy, staying involved in her sons' education, music, and sports activities. Between her roles as a mother and a teacher, Amanda is dedicated to the wellbeing and success of children.

Nominated by Krishna Abrams, Solano County District Attorney

Nancy Wells

Educator and Community Volunteer

Dixon — Solano County

Nancy Wells has dedicated her twenty-year career to education and exemplifies the true meaning of public servant, volunteer and advocate for school aged children, adults and senior citizens in the community.

Nancy was instrumental in implementing many innovative programs during her professional career. She instituted “Just for Kids,” a program that matched at risk elementary students with adult volunteers, who would spend time helping students having difficulties with school subjects. She also started the “Latch Key Program” an afterschool program that provided a place for students to do their homework in a safe environment while their parents were at work. As director of Special Education, she was able to provide outstanding programs for children with special needs offering them academic training at a level in which they would be successful.

Nancy is also involved in various community organizations. She was a founding member of the Dixon Family Services agency, where she started a Grief Intervention Program for children. She’s also a member of the Dixon Advocates for Seniors as well as a member of Dixon’s Community Care Home Auxiliary.

Nancy is considered a kind, compassionate and devoted person who is always willing to volunteer wherever she is needed. Nancy serves on the St. Peter’s parish leadership team and is a long-time community servant.

Nominated by Dave Johnson and Jack Batchelor

Cathie Wicks

*Non Profit Administrator
Esparto-Capay Valley
Yolo County*

Cathie Wicks entire professional career has been spent in Yolo County advocating to improve the quality of life for rural children, families, and communities.

Cathie is the founder and immediate past Executive Director of RISE, Inc. (Rural Innovations in Social Economics, Inc.). Ms. Wicks has over 35 years of non-profit administrative experience, including extensive grant project development and supervision, rural program design, implementation and project based fund control experience. Cathie is also a lifetime mission-builder in innovative leadership programs for teens, with an interest in intervention models for motivated at-risk youth.

Cathie's early work history includes raising sheep, which began as a hobby. In the early 1970's, she started her career in the anti-poverty upward mobility programs focused on continuing education and diversified education. She also co-founded a non-profit to leverage grants from outside the community. Cathy served as Executive Director of RISE for the next 25 years. Her work didn't stop there, Cathie integrated her grant writing skills to assist Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation in grant writing, policy development and programs designed to enhance the community.

Cathie is the face of non-profit success in rural Western Yolo County, building programs, trends, strong organizations, and fiscal success modes that have improved the quality of life in rural communities. Cathie enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren, still raises sheep with her son, enjoys golf and travels with friends, family and colleagues.

Nominated by Cecilia Aguiar Curry

K. Patrice Williams

*Entrepreneur, Public Servant
Fairfield –Solano County*

K. Patrice Williams has dedicated her twenty-year career to strengthening small business in Solano County and her advocacy illustrates her talents as a true public servant. She is currently the principal advocate for BrandGov; an agency offering targeted outreach, messaging, social media marketing and more to small businesses, non-profit organizations and government entities in the Solano area.

K. Patrice's experience as an activist has given her a deep understanding of economic and workforce development, infrastructure, energy and transportation challenges and a business approach understanding of proposed solutions. Working in partnership with public and private organizations, Solano College Small Business Development Center, Solano College Workforce Development Center and Solano College has allowed her to develop a strategic plan to diversify and maximize Solano County's local economy utilizing stakeholders as a resource.

K. Patrice's professional experience includes Chief Brand Strategist for Brand Gov.; she was an Adjunct Professor at Napa Valley College; Director of Marketing for WH Holdings LLC, Manager for DoubleClick, and Team Leader-Business Development for IBM. She holds a Juris Doctorate, Business Concentration from San Francisco Law School and a Bachelor of Arts, Economics, Marketing Concentration from Sonoma State University.

Nominated by Peggy Cohen-Thompson and Dionne McCullar

Patricia Zetah

*Educator and Community Servant
Vacaville – Solano County*

Ms. Patricia Zetah has dedicated many years to the public education system, continuing to volunteer after her retirement. Ms. Zetah retired as a school principal from Travis Unified School District, having worked as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, program manager, and vice principal. During her time as a teacher, Ms. Zetah went above and beyond what was required of her. She served as a mentor to many new teachers and provided professional development workshops for others throughout the district and state. She served as President and board member of the Solano County Reading Association and to this day volunteers giving reading tests at Center Elementary School.

Ms. Zetah currently serves as President of the local chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma Honor Society for Women Educators, where she organizes charitable programs to benefit children's education. For the past seven years she has worked with St. Mary's Church and Vacaville Unified School District to put on Education Forums where participating children receive free books. Ms. Zetah is so devoted to this project that she has donated hundreds of her own books.

Through both her career and her volunteer work, Patricia Zetah has demonstrated her dedication to children's education.

Nominated by Elizabeth Irwin and Edith Santomieri

Congressman John Garamendi

California District 3

