

2009 Salute to Women Award Winners

Marguerite Payez Lifetime Achievement Award – *State Senator Patsy Ticer*

Patsy Ticer's passion for good government and its power to help our citizens has been a factor in her life since she majored in government at Sweet Briar. She acquired her early leadership skills as an active volunteer for TWIG, several PTAs and other organizations in Alexandria, and in 1982 she was elected to the Alexandria City Council, serving two terms until she became the City's first woman Mayor in 1991. In these years she focused on at-risk children and created several new citywide service programs – and along the way, she also “persuaded” Jack Kent Cooke that Alexandria was not the place for a new Redskins stadium. Ticer also chaired the Virginia Governor's Council on Child Day Care and Early Childhood Programs, and the Washington Regional Council of Governments, the Transportation Planning Board and the Washington Region's Metro Planning Organization. In 1996, she was elected as State Senator – another “first” –and her focus in the Senate includes transportation problems, improving the quality of local government, and helping the state's neediest children.

Women's Health and Safety Advocate Award – *Frances Hicks*

Frances Hicks is a lifelong advocate for policies and programs to reduce domestic violence. For many years she was active with the Fairfax Commission for Women and Alexandria NOW, and taught in several colleges. She is widely known throughout the metropolitan area for her emails to the community filled with news about issues affecting women. Today she serves as Coordinator of the Alexandria Commission for Women's Court Observation Program. The program, a volunteer-based court monitoring and research project, follows cases in the courts of sexual and domestic violence. Then feedback is provided to the community's criminal justice system to encourage improved response to other cases of violence and assault. Hicks works with, organizes and helps train the volunteers who serve as court observers.

Youth Community Services Award – *Dr. Diane Reese*

Named one of the top 10 school counselors in America, Dr. Diane Reese is a counselor in the Alexandria City Public Schools, where she now serves at the TC Williams Secondary Training and Education Program (STEP Center), which focuses on at-risk students. Reese has spent many years working with Alexandria's young people in several City agencies, including service as lead staff on what is now known as the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP). In her present work at the STEP Center, Reese launched Project GOAL (Girls having Opportunities for Academic Success and Leadership), an after-school leadership program designed to expose students to resources, opportunities and experiences to help them become successful leaders. She also serves as parent involvement coordinator, and as liaison between the school and the community, she developed the annual “Take Your Parent to School” Day – a first for high schools that resulted in many parents and community members visiting the school. She is the winner of numerous awards for her tireless work in supporting and encouraging her students.

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Leadership in Business & Career Development Award – *Marcia Call*

Marcia Call has had a successful career in marketing, consulting and supporting businesses, especially those owned by women – and has combined her lifelong professional excellence with raising a family and intensive community involvement. A talent executive with In-Q-Tel, a nonprofit venture capital firm, she was formerly the president of McKinley Marketing Partners, a large marketing firm that almost exclusively engaged women as consultants. Past president of Abracadabra Preschool’s Parent Advisory Board, she serves now on the Board of The Campagna Center, Alexandria’s premiere social service agency that services many women and children in need in our community. Call has also worked to encourage and support women to seek political office in Alexandria – and every day she makes time to mentor young women and encourage them to live their dreams.

Marian Van Landingham Legislation and Public Policy – *Karen Gautney*

Karen Gautney’s Alexandria is one that is safe, caring and inclusive for all people. A tireless and respected advocate for human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other minority or underserved communities, she is a role model for women, both gay and straight, for effective leadership. Gautney works as Deputy Executive Director of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, she serves on Alexandria’s Human Rights Commission as Vice Chair, and as a very engaged and creative volunteer in the Office on Women’s initiative to improve services and outreach to the LGBTQ survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Gautney works with the Alexandria City Public Schools counselors and social workers to create a safe and harassment-free environment for LGBTQ students. This accomplished leader and change agent also served as president of the Alexandria Gay and Lesbian Community Association, where she committed the organization to community service.

Rising Star Award – *Alicia Hughes*

In just two years of residence in Alexandria, Alicia Hughes, a pharmacology patent examiner at the US Patent & Trademark Office, has become an involved and committed member of the community. She is a member of the Alexandria Early Childhood Commission, the Alexandria Social Services Advisory Board and the School District’s Budget Advisory Committee. She also reads to preschool children several afternoons a week at Hopkins House, and chairs a literacy program where she coordinates volunteers to read with children in the schools. Her interest in childhood literacy continues with her work as a mentor in Alexandria’s Project STEPOUT Program, a partnership between the Zeta Chi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, where she is a member, and the Alexandria Office on Women. She is also an active member of the Washington Junior League, and participates in Leadership Alexandria 2009 and the Sorensen Institute Political Leader Program Class of 2009.

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Making a Difference Award – *Alice Merrill and Linda Odell*

Alice Merrill is Director of Development and Outreach for The Art League of Alexandria. As a key organizer of Alexandria's "Space of Her Own" (SOHO) Program, Merrill has been involved in engaging artists and volunteer mentors to work with 5th grade Alexandria girls who are from at-risk families and are at risk for delinquent behavior. The SOHO program, recognized nationally for its success, is designed to have a meaningful and lasting impact on participants through weekly lessons designed to foster artistic growth and learning essential life skills. Merrill and her collaborator Linda Odell have worked to secure financing for the program during its seven successful years working to turn out confident, positive young women.

Linda Odell is the Director of Alternative Programs for the Alexandria Court Services Unit -- and she has played a major role as conceiver, organizer, coordinator and creator of Alexandria's "Space of Her Own" (SOHO) program, done in partnership with The Art League. SOHO, for at-risk girls, is an arts-based nine-month annual mentoring program that pairs young girls with mentors, who then attend workshops together and decorate each young girl's living space. The program helps forge long-term relationships between the adult mentor and the student, offers new skills, helps build self-confidence and many other aspects of building a successful and satisfying life. Twenty-five young girls participate each year since the program began in 2003, and the program's effectiveness is underscored by the fact that almost none of the participants have had any criminal or legal difficulty.

Vola Lawson Award – *Audrey Davis*

Audrey Davis is the Assistant Director and a curator of the Alexandria Black History Museum, where she has worked since 1993. She has contributed to the status of Alexandria's women and girls by creating and coordinating outreach programs, producing exhibitions, researching, developing education kits, and collecting artifacts and documents that focus on Alexandria's and Virginia's African American women. She has overseen special in-house exhibitions like *Ah! That Jack and Jill: Parents Empowering African American Children* and the annual *Teddy Bear Tea* event, a fun and educational event that teaches dining etiquette for children ages five to ten years. She also worked with the City's Office on Women on two projects focused on sexual violence. The *Century of Just Women* exhibition at the Black History Museum is her project as well, and portrays Alexandria women from 1900 –1999 who have made a difference. She is the current President of the Alexandria Historical Society and is a long-time member of the Virginia Association of Museums Council. Governors Warner and Kaine have both appointed her to the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy.

