



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

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Riverside County

NEWS RELEASE

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Riverside County recognizes women, young ladies of the year for work on women's issues

Ten women and young ladies chosen by the Riverside County Commission for Women were recognized today (5/23) for their work to bring about social and economic change, for acting as role models and for improving the status of women in Riverside County.

The Commission for Women's 2017 Woman & Young Lady of the Year awards were presented at the Board of Supervisors meeting in Riverside. The women and young ladies also were recognized for the efforts to promote women's equality, and for their work on behalf of women's issues or providing outstanding performance in their professions to further advocate women's rights.

Young Lady of the Year

First District: Gina Tran is a junior at Norte Vista High School in Riverside where she is president of the school club portion of the AVID program, historian for the Best Buddies club, involved with the girl's tennis team, and active member of the Riverside County Youth Commission program for the first district. Her selfless attitude and dedication to serving others shines during her work with the community through both the Best Buddies club, an organization that works with developmentally disabled student on the Norte Vista campus, as well as comforting families of fatal patients with SICU at the Riverside Community Hospital. With well over 400 hours of community service on top of taking numerous Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes, Gina Tran is a wonderful asset to the community and those she serves.

Second District: Carolina Hernandez is a senior attending Corona High School. She currently holds a weighted 4.02 grade point average and intends to continue her education at the University of California, Berkeley, where she plans on studying education and pursue a career in teaching. Carolina is the president of the Big Brothers Big Sisters club at Corona High School where she serves as a role model to young women and men her age and younger. In addition, she serves as the Co-president of the AVID Council, Vice President of the Library Club and the K-Pop club, and recently received the UNITY award for her outstanding community service. Carolina is an inspiration to many students and has a bright future ahead of her.



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Third District: Despite life challenges Andrea Mares faced at an early age alongside her mother, she has continued to go above and beyond in both her academics and extracurricular activities. Carolina is a senior at the Western Center Academy and currently holds an overall 4.35 grade point average. She has taken numerous advanced placement and college courses and has continued to excel. Over the course of her high school career, Carolina has held several leadership roles such as, Class of 2017 Secretary, Vice President of the Community Service Interact Club, is a member of the Associated Student Body, was named president of the National Honors Society, and recently became a member of the Yearbook Committee. The list of her accomplishments and awards is endless. Carolina is a natural and kind leader who is a role model to young women her age.

Fourth District: Ngan Nguyen arrived in the United States from Vietnam less than six years ago as a seventh grader and before the end of eighth grade she was reclassified from an English Learner to Fluent English Proficiency. This was the beginning of Ngan's determination to persevere and become a role model to the other students at her school. Ngan is a senior at La Quinta High School where she holds a 4.3 grade point average as an International Baccalaureate student. She has been the recipient of La Quinta High School's highest academic award honor for three consecutive years, was recently crowned Queen Scheherazade of Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival, is an active member of the Knot's for Tots club, Key Club, and involved in serving her parish. Ngan also works as a server at her family's restaurant. Ngan has both, graciously and successfully, maintained her academics, school commitments, and duties as Queen Scheherazade; she has also recently been accepted to both California State University, Fullerton and San Diego State University.

Fifth District: Madison Demaris has a true passion for theatre and arts education. She is a senior at Nuvieu Bridge Early College High School where she has dedicated the last four years to the arts and mentoring others so that they too can share in the vibrant and lively experience theatre has brought her. Madison developed a Project PART, which partners with the schools troupe, local organizations, and two local elementary schools where she directed and produced "The Little Mermaid Jr." with minimal adult help. She has been a peer tutor, volunteers her time to help younger high school students with their competition pieces, and was selected to be on the State Board for the California State Thespians, which is an honor society for high school theatre students. Madison is an eloquent problem solver who is dedicated to serving and sharing her passion for the arts with the students around her.

Woman of the Year

First District: Carol Roquemore is the leader and founder of Canine Support Teams, which was established in 1989. She is a firm believer in serving her clients first and her staff second. Carol's passion for providing independence for individuals with disabilities comes from not only personal physical limitations stemming from early childhood but her selfless want to help others in need. In addition, Carol has been a tireless champion and inspiration for incarcerated women through the life changing Prison Pups Program she created in 2002. She dedicated 10 hours a week to Prison Pups training sessions with her staff, and has also been influential in rehabilitation programs within the California Corrections and Probation Departments. In 2012, Carol established the Paws for Wounded Veterans



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program that provides Service Dogs to disabled veterans at no charge to them or their families. Carol is a tireless and inspirational leader.

Second District: Kathy Azevedo has been a resident of the Second District for more than 45 years and demonstrated a sincere and passionate commitment to improving the community. A two-time breast cancer survivor, Kathy is the driving force behind the nonprofit organization Support Sisterz. Support Sisterz provide empowerment and moral support to breast cancer survivors as well as raises money for women who have been recently diagnosed with breast cancer. Kathy is also a member of the National Grant Review Board for the American Cancer Society, owner and instructor of a Jazzercise franchise for almost 35 years, former city councilwoman and Mayor of the city of Norco. She has dedicated countless hours to improving not only the community but to the health and wellbeing of women.

Third District: Alice Sullivan began her career at the Temecula Valley Chamber of Commerce in 1989. She has worked her way up through every position until becoming the President/CEO in 1994. She has launched several organizations that have tremendously affected and benefited the Temecula Valley, including the Southwest California Legislative Council, the Economic Development Coalition, and the Temecula Valley Convention & Visitor's Bureau. Alice initiated the Valley Young Professionals, which provides up and coming professionals with the opportunity to connect with other professionals, share experiences, better understand corporate culture, and identify career growth opportunities. Alice has also served on countless committees and Boards that have greatly influenced the Temecula Valley area.

Fourth District: Barbara Keller and her husband Jerry are business owners in the Palm Springs and La Quinta area; LULU a California Bistro and Bistro 60. Barbara is also a trustee of the Palm Springs Art Museum, past president of the Museum Associates Council and co-chaired the Museum's 75th anniversary gala. Her love for the arts goes back to the 70's and 80's where she wrote and directed plays at the North Shore Community Arts Center in Great Neck, New York. She has held leadership roles on Humanitarian Boards, LGBT Boards, and Jewish Family Services committees. Barbara is the recipient of several awards such as, the Vi Felix Award for Outstanding Volunteer Award from Jewish Family Service of the Desert, the Jackie Lee Houston Philanthropy Award granted by Palm Springs Women in Film & Television, the 2014 Humanitarian Award from Equality California, and countless others.

Fifth District: Dr. Denise Fleming is a well-known leader in the prosperous and educated Fifth District of Riverside County. She is a personal mentor to many youths in the Inland Empire, including Miss Moreno Valley. Dr. Fleming is the director and founder of the African American Coalition, is an elected member on the School Board for Moreno Valley Unified School District, a docent for the Mission Inn Hotel in Riverside, and is one of the facilitators for the "Dream It Be It" program at the Bridges Learning Center. Her career as an educator and business professional expands throughout California including, University of California, Los Angeles, California State University San Bernardino, and University of Redlands. Dr. Fleming also sat on many non-profit boards serving the Inland Empire communities in public service including Care Conexus, an Alzheimer's Daycare Center, Harvest Community Development Center, and PSN International. Her dream to educate and empower women is clearly evident by her numerous contributions and dedicated time.

For more information, contact Rebecca Chavez, Commission for Women Liaison at (951) 955-0226.

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