



Maryland Commission for Women
Annual Report

July 2014 | June 2015

Table of Contents

Message from the Secretary.....	3
Message from the Chair.....	4
Report of the Executive Director.....	5
Setting the Agenda.....	7
Building Partnerships.....	9
Advocating for Maryland’s Women.....	12
Recognizing Women of Historic Significance.....	14
Encouraging Leadership in Young Women.....	16
Improving Access to Health Resources.....	19
Reaching Out.....	21
Strengthening Our Work Structure.....	22
Supporting Women in Transition.....	23
In Memoriam.....	24

Maryland Commission for Women

July 2014 – June 2015

Officers:

Dr. Kathleen White, Chair
Mythili (Lee) Bachu, Vice Chair
Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary

Commissioners:

Homayara Aziz	*Varsha Mathur
*Sylvia Butler	*Ginger Miller
Patricia E. Cornish	*Necole Parker
Lillian Cruz	Betsy Ramirez
*Nicole Drew	Anita Riley
*Diane Fink	Debbie Risper
Lorna Forde	*Amanda Rodriguez
Helen Holton	*Toni Sandridge
*Michele Hughes	*Cara Tenenbaum
Velvet Johnson	Roseanna Vogt
*Cynthia Lifson	A. Diane Williams

Staff:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Crystal Young, Program Manager (*transferred to new position January, 2015*)
Bev Thoms, Volunteer Program Specialist
Lesley Calderon, Student Intern, Wootton High School
Maka Gioshvili, Professional Fellow, American Councils for International Education

**Resigned or term ended mid-year*

Message from the Secretary

The Maryland Commission for Women offers women and girls a seat at the table of State government and creates pathways of leadership and equal employment opportunities. Members form a community of women leaders who forge meaningful partnerships in government, the business community and our nonprofit sector. We all have a stake in choosing policies that help women succeed. Women make up about half of America's workforce, and it is vital that everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive and succeed in our great state.



I am honored to help celebrate the amazing achievements of so many women across Maryland in the last year. I'd like to personally congratulate Mythili Bachu on being elected as the new Chair of the Maryland Commission for Women, as well as thank Dr. Kathleen White for her leadership while serving as Chair this past year. Both of you serve as exemplary role models for so many men and women across Maryland.

Established in 1985, the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame seeks to honor Maryland women who have made unique and lasting contributions to the economic, political, cultural, and social life of the state, and to provide visible models of achievement for tomorrow's female leaders. To date, 162 women have achieved the honor of being inducted into the Hall of Fame. I look forward to seeing this year's honorees added to the plaque on display at the Maryland Women's Heritage Center in Baltimore.

DHR supports this Commission and its dedication to championing the women who make Maryland a strong and vibrant state.

Sam Malhotra

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Malhotra". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Secretary
Maryland Department of Human Resources

Message from Lee Bachu, Chair



Mythili Bachu was elected Chair of the Maryland Commission for Women August 6, 2015

As the incoming Chair, it is my duty and my honor to present the annual report of the Maryland Commission for Women for Fiscal Year 2015, highlighting our many activities and accomplishments over the last year.

It has been a season of challenges and achievements as we welcomed a new executive director, moved to new offices, undertook a demanding agenda for the year, welcomed new commissioners and said farewell to outgoing commissioners and staff.

The Commission for Women is a 25-member board established by state law and charged with the responsibility of advising the Executive and Legislative branches of government, through the Secretary of the Department of Human Resources, on the issues of concern to the women of our state. Our commissioners are appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate and devote many hours of public service on behalf of our state's women and girls.

These commissioners truly present a cross section of Maryland's richly diverse population, representing its varied geographic regions and demographic communities, as well as a wide range in age and professions. However, they all share a dedication to improving the lives of women and girls and a devotion to community service.

Much appreciation is due to these commissioners for all they have contributed. Very special thanks must go to our outgoing president, Dr. Kathleen White, whose leadership and hard work have been a critical element in all of the Commission's activities over the past year that she served as its Chair and over the past eight years during which she has been an active commissioner.

I appreciate the Commissioners' vote of confidence in electing me to chair this hard-working organization and welcome the start of the coming year as the Commission sets its priorities and develops its program agenda for FY 16. We are so very grateful for the support we receive from the Governor's office and from the office of the Secretary of the Department of Human Resources. This support is undeniable evidence of their commitment to equality of opportunity for all Marylanders and we look forward to continuing our work on behalf of our state's women and girls.

Sincerely,

Mythili (Lee) Bachu,
Chair

Report of the Executive Director

Judith Vaughan-Prather



FY 2015 was a year of transition and accomplishment for the Maryland Commission for Women (MCW). Dr. Kathleen White was elected as the new Chair of the Commission in June of 2015. The newly re-established Executive Director position was filled effective July 7 and the office was moved from Baltimore to Rockville that month, as well. Crystal Young, the Commission's beloved Program Manager for nearly five years, left the office in January 2015 to accept a promotion in another office of the Department of Human Resources. Over the course of the year, a total of 25 individuals served on the Commission – some for the entire year, some have served for many years, and some for just a few months.

The Commission met in September 2014 to establish its priority areas of concern, form its committees and set its agenda for the fiscal year:

- In October, the Commission lent its support to a **conference to help incarcerated women** prepare for return to their families and communities.
- In November, the Commission brought together the **county commissions for women from all across Maryland** to share strategies and information.
- The Commission's **website was completely overhauled** and updated.
- A **new online women's health information resource directory was created** and posted on the Commission's website.
- The Commission's **bylaws were updated** to take advantage of technological advances for meeting participation.
- The MCW undertook an ambitious **legislative agenda** – presenting testimony on six bills, supporting the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women, and vigorously participating in the Maryland Women's Legislative Briefing – as part of the planning committee, providing speakers on six panels and staffing a well-received exhibit.
- In March, the Commission inducted six extraordinary women into **the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame** at a ceremony in Annapolis – bringing well-deserved and permanent recognition to a U.S. Congresswoman, a nuclear engineer, an aviation engineer, a pediatric epidemiologist, a former Maryland Secretary of Aging and community activist, and the first women ever to head the Maryland National Guard.
- In June, the Commission encouraged young women to strive for excellence through its **Women of Tomorrow** program, presenting awards to six middle and high school students with exceptional records of academic achievement and community service.

Reports of these activities follow, but the Commission undertook other activities as well. The Commission for Women:

- Provided commissioners to serve on the Boards of Directors of the Maryland Women's Heritage Center, the Friends of the Commission for Women, the Maryland Women's Legislative Agenda, the National

- Association of Commissions for Women, the Commission to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and the Maryland Working Matters Campaign;
- Sent three representatives – the current and former chairs and the executive director - to the annual conference of the National Association of Commissions for Women in Sarasota, Florida in July;
 - Lent its sponsorship and participation to the Women’s Empowerment (WE3) Conference held in Prince George’s County in October;
 - Co-sponsored events held at the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center and supported others sponsored by the Maryland Women’s Legislative Agenda;
 - Helped organize and participated in a Conference of the Commissions for Women in the Mid-Atlantic Region in October;
 - Attended the annual meeting of the Korean American Women’s Society of Maryland;
 - Provided speakers for a number of public events including:
 - A conference in October speaking on Women in Cyber Security
 - The statewide conference of the Coalition of 100 Black Women;
 - Received a briefing on women in the military in November from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;
 - Attended a briefing on The Status of Women in the States, sponsored by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, and excerpted the data relevant to the women of Maryland;
 - Loaned its Executive Director to the DHR Strategic Planning Team helping design a Welfare to Entrepreneurship Initiative;
 - Sent at least 35 announcements, information and issue alerts to its 250+ member distribution list of individuals and organizations across the state;
 - Hosted a young lawyer intern from the Eurasian nation of Georgia, sponsored by the American Councils for International Education and funded by the U.S. Department of State. She worked full-time in the MCW office for a month, visiting with two of Maryland’s Congressional Representatives and numerous other state officials and advocates for women’s rights;
 - Benefitted from the contributions of two other volunteers:
 - A student from Wootton High School who worked at the MCW office at least two afternoons per week for the entire school year and helped staff both the Women’s Legislative Briefing and the Hall of Fame event;
 - A volunteer program specialist worked in the office two afternoons per week and provided the research to create the online women’s health information and resource directory.

Of course, all of the commissioners donate their time and considerable expertise to the benefit of the women and girls of Maryland. Even while undergoing the many changes it experienced this past twelve months, the Commission made remarkable contributions to our community. Reports of its committees follow, and much appreciation is due to all those who dedicated their time and effort to the work of the Maryland Commission for Women during this past year.

Setting the Agenda

2014 – 2015 MCW Annual Planning Meeting

On September 12, the Maryland Commission for Women (MCW) met at the Miller Senate Office Building in Annapolis to deliberate the status of women in the state and to set its priority areas of concern for the coming year. The commissioners were addressed during these deliberations by Senator Delores Kelley and Secretary Gloria Lawlah, head of the Maryland Department of Aging and Chair of the Maryland Commission to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Dr. Kathleen White, Chair of the Commission for Women, opened the day's deliberations by reviewing data culled from the U.S. Census and information compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research reflecting some of the key issues confronting women in this state.



Chair Dr. Kathleen White presenting data on women in Maryland



Senator Delores Kelley addresses the Maryland Commission for Women

Senator Kelley presented a compelling charge to action, describing the MCW's history as an advocate for Maryland women. She noted challenging issues deserving attention, including the shortage of rape investigation kits in emergency rooms around the state, sexual assault on college campuses and the increase in the number of women approaching their elder years providing home care to their own or their spouses' parents.

Secretary Lawlah began her remarks by noting that the work of the MCW is still very important, stating "Just when we thought we'd made great progress . . . here comes the domestic violence situation" (in the

NFL) "which just shows us that there is still much work to be done." She said, "We know that the MCW is a force for change."

The MCW identified three major areas of concern for this year:

- Violence Against Women, including human trafficking, rape kits in emergency medical facilities and intimate partner violence.
- Economic Equity for Women including pay equity, financial literacy, job discrimination, paid leave, increased minimum wage, STEM education and careers and child care, and
- Health and Wellness for Women, including HIV/AIDS in the senior population, chronic disease, mental wellness and obesity.

The Commissioners then identified several strategies they will employ to address these issues, which included legislative and policy advocacy, partnerships with other public and private organizations and information sharing.



Commissioner Anita Riley

In addition, the MCW planned to sponsor several events during the year including the induction ceremony for the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame, a meeting of all the local commissions for women in the state, the Women of Tomorrow Awards, recognizing teen girls of extraordinary character and achievement, and to cosponsor a conference for incarcerated women.



Commissioners Pat Cornish, Velvet Johnson and Roseanna Vogt



*Members of the Maryland Commission for Women at the Miller Senate Office Building
Back row, from left: Varsha Mathur, Lorna Forde, Lillian Cruz, Michele Hughes, Lee Bachu, Velvet Johnson, Toni Sandridge, Pat Cornish, Helen Holton, Amanda Rodriguez. Front Row: Wandra Ashley Williams, Dr. Kathleen White, Ginger Miller, Dr. Homayara Aziz, Nicole Drew, Roseanna Vogt and Anita Riley*

Building Partnerships

Maryland Commissions for Women Roundtable Conference

Twenty-nine individuals representing nine of the 16 Commissions for Women from across the state of Maryland met in the Miller Senate Office Building in Annapolis on November 14, 2014 in a conference convened by the Maryland Commission for Women. Senator Karen Montgomery sponsored the MCW use of the President's Conference Room, and the Friends of the Commission for Women sponsored the meal provided to those in attendance.

MCW Chair Dr. Kathleen White presented data on the economic status of women in Maryland and asked the participants to consider the implications of this data for their CFW's plans and priorities.

Among the issues highlighted were:

- The need for access to good quality child care
- The number of grandparents raising children
- The number of women in the "sandwich generation" caring both for children and for aging parents
- The number of women incarcerated, and the strain on their families this creates

Lee Bachu, Vice Chair of the Maryland CFW, discussed the MCW's priorities for this year and described the MCW's two signature events: The [Maryland Women's Hall of Fame](#) and the [Women of Tomorrow Awards Program](#), encouraging all those in attendance to make nominations for both.

Jill Moss Greenberg, Founder and retiring Executive Director of the Maryland Women's Heritage Center, began her remarks with a quote often attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt, "Women are like tea bags. You never know how strong they are until you put them in hot water." She cited the history of the Center, noting its origins from the Maryland Commission for Women and the local Commissions for Women (CFWs) in our state.

Diana Bailey, Managing Director, described the Maryland Women's Heritage Center's current programming, encouraging the participants to visit its website at www.mwhc.org. Unique in the nation, the MWHC is a private non-profit organization and a resource on women's history for all Marylanders.

Representatives of the county CFWs then discussed the structure and authorization of their commissions, their priority issues and challenges.

Among the priority issues addressed by many of the CFWs are:

- Dating violence/healthy relationships/domestic violence
- Human trafficking
- Women's health
- Title IX, educational equity, and STEM education and careers for women and girls
- Economic equity, economic empowerment
- Women in poverty

- Recognizing women’s contributions and achievements
- Women veterans

Among the top challenges confronting the CFWs were:

- Insufficient funding
- Retaining commissioners
- Keeping commissioners committed and active
- Effective use of social media

A panel of women’s advocacy organization leaders discussed Effective Advocacy for Commissions for Women:

Michaele Cohen is president of the [Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women](#) (MLAW) – a coalition of women’s advocates from across the state who join together to establish a single agenda of bills to be considered in the Maryland General Assembly, and to advocate with united voices for those bills. She is also Executive Director of the [Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence](#) (MNADV). Both MLAW and the MNADV can be great resources for CFW’s legislative advocacy. MLAW holds a fall conference each year to develop its legislative platform for the Maryland General Assembly, and a reception at the beginning of the legislative session to introduce the Legislative Agenda to the legislators. She recommended that CFWs:

- Send a representative to the Fall Conference
- Join MLAW and get on its distribution list to receive legislative action alerts
- Sign on to support the agenda
- Send a representative to the Legislative Reception in January
- Work with MLAW toward the successful passage of those bills

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence is part of a network of similar organizations in every state. MNADV offers education, training and advocacy on domestic violence issues and coordinates activities to combat domestic violence. It is a centralized clearinghouse on domestic violence in our state.

Leni Preston is chair of the [Maryland Women’s Coalition for Health Care Reform](#) (MWCHCR), a non-profit, non-partisan organization. She said that women make 80% of the health care decisions for their families, and noted that many CFWs in the state are members of the MWCHCR which has thousands of individual members and 100 organizational members. Its purpose is to seek solutions and to advance reforms that promote health care equity, and MWCHCR places a high priority on advocacy. Now that health care reform legislation has passed, many previously uninsured individuals are covered, but the new programs can be confusing and we need health care literacy to ensure that people understand how the benefits work and how to make the best decisions for their selves and their families. She encouraged all CFWs to get on the MWCHCR distribution list and then share the announcements with their commissioners and their constituents.

Morgan Weibel, co-chair of the Victims Services Committee of the [Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force](#) and Supervising Immigration Attorney at the [Tahirih Justice Center](#) reported that the Human Trafficking Task Force has established five subcommittees: Victims Services, Law Enforcement, Training, Legislation, and Public Awareness and Outreach. She noted that while young boys and LGBT individuals are victimized, 80% of the human trafficking victims are women and girls.

Melissa Broome, Senior Policy Advocate at the [Job Opportunities Task Force](#) noted that the U.S. is the only industrialized nation in the world with no law mandating paid sick leave for all workers. Among U.S. workers, 40% do not have a single day of paid sick leave, that means there are over 700,000 workers in Maryland with no access who must lose a day of pay if they have to stay home to care for a sick child or because they are sick themselves. She noted further that 75% of part-time workers have no sick leave. Many low income workers labor at multiple part-time jobs to make ends meet, but then have no sick leave. More than half of all workers with incomes less than \$35,000 per year have no sick leave.



Delegate Adrienne Jones with panelists (from the right) Michaela Cohen, Leni Preston, Morgan Weibel and Melissa Broome

The **Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker Pro-Tem of the Maryland House of Delegates**, wrapped up the panel discussion. She noted that of the 188 members in the Maryland General Assembly, there are only 59 women – an increase from 57 before the election. In 2015, there will be 14 women in the Senate and 45 in the House of Delegates. She advised that legislators respond better to people from their own jurisdictions so it is important for advocates to talk to their own representatives. She suggested that advocates write their legislators early, not waiting for the hearings to let their legislators know of their positions. She also advised that it is important that women speak not just on the traditional “women’s issues,” but on a broad range of concerns, and in that way women will become a powerful voice in the Maryland legislature.

Dr. Kathleen White closed the conference by encouraging those in attendance to strengthen ties and determination to work together on behalf of Maryland’s women and girls. She invited the CFW representatives to send the Maryland Commission for Women information about their events and initiatives and the MCW will share it with the other CFWs in the state. She thanked everyone for attending, participating so actively and for sharing so much valuable information.



Advocating for Maryland's Women

Legislation and Public Policy Committee

Chair: Velvet Johnson

Committee Members: Wandra Ashley-Williams, Pat Cornish, Lillian Cruz, Nicole Drew, Diane Fink, Michele Hughes, Cynthia Lifson, Anita Riley, Amanda Rodriguez, Toni Sandridge



Commissioner Velvet Johnson testifies before the House Judicial Proceedings Committee on February 27, 2015.

The Legislation and Public Policy Committee met in September and set as its goal for the year to establish a strong and effective role for the MCW in the state's public policy and legislative decision making, and to build coalition and cooperation with local CFWs in the state on women's issues.

Towards that end, the committee chair and the MCW Executive Director met with Delegate Tawanna Gaines, Chair of the Caucus of Maryland Women Legislators on February 27 to discuss the MCW's legislative priorities and its planned activities.

The committee participated actively in the work of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women – a coalition of women's advocacy organizations that develops a platform of Maryland General Assembly bills that are of concern to women and to coordinate advocacy on those issues. The MCW co-sponsored the MLAW fall conference held on November 15, 2014 in Ellicott City and was represented there by Chair, Dr. Kathleen

White, Commissioner Wandra Ashley-Williams and its Executive Director. MLAW held its annual briefing and reception in Annapolis on March 12, 2015. Commissioners attending included Chair Dr. Kathleen White, Co-chair Lee Bachu, Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams, and Commissioners Lorna Forde, Cynthia Lifson, Anita Riley, Roseanna Vogt, and Diane Williams along with the MCW Executive Director.

Through this committee's work, the MCW took a robust role in the January 25, 2015 Women's Legislative Briefing in Rockville. The MCW was one of the community sponsors of the event which is attended annually by an audience of over 600. Commissioners Nicole Drew, Diane Williams and Lorna Forde participated on the WLB planning committee meeting for six months to organize the event. Commissioner Forde was co-chair of the planning committee and Commissioner Williams co-chaired one of the subcommittees.

Six of the MCW Commissioners served as speakers on the panels addressing legislative issues: Velvet Johnson, Dr. Homayara Aziz, Helen Holton, Cara Tennenbaum, Cynthia Lifson and Amanda Rodriguez. MCW Chair Dr. Kathleen White represented the MCW in the Presidents' Networking Session for leaders of women's advocacy organizations, and the commission staffed an exhibit table throughout the event. The MCW Executive Director gave many hours of consultation to the Montgomery County Commission for Women as the Briefing was being planned.



Commissioner Helen Holton speaking at the 2015 WLB

For its own legislative advocacy, the MCW selected three proposals (six bills cross-filed in the House and the Senate):

- SB 477/HB 606 Persons Eligible for Relief which would expand the definition of persons eligible for relief in the Maryland protective order statute to include all survivors of sexual and dating violence;
- SB 78/HB 503 Rape Survivor Family Protection Act which would limit the parental rights of rapists whose crime results in a pregnancy;
- SB 269/HB 225 Domestic Violence Additional Relief, which would expand the relief available in a civil protection order by authorizing a District Court Commissioner, when issuing an interim protective order, or a court, when issuing a temporary or final protective order, to include any other relief appropriate under the circumstances to protect the victim.



MCW Chair Dr. Kathleen White with Commissioners Nicole Drew and Amanda Rodriguez, MCW Intern Lesley Calderon and volunteer Imani Drew in front of the MCW exhibit at the 2015 WLB.

Written testimony on behalf of the MCW was submitted on all six bills, and on February 27, 2015, Committee Chair Velvet Johnson, accompanied by the MCW Executive Director, presented testimony on HB 606 and HB 225 in a public hearing before the House Judicial Proceedings Committee.

Of the three proposals on which the MCW submitted testimony, the two domestic violence bills passed. The Rape Survivor Family Protection Act failed in committee.

Recognizing Women of Historic Significance
2015 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame
Ordinary Women: Extraordinary Lives

2015 Planning Committee:

Co-chairs: Commissioners Lillian Cruz and Amanda Rodriguez

Committee Members: Nicole Drew, Lee Bachu, Necole Parker



Top Row: Commissioner Nicole Drew, DHR Secretary Sam Malhotra, Commissioners Diane Fink, Lorna Forde, Wandra Ashley-Williams, Dr. Kathleen White, Chair, Lee Bachu, Dr. Homayara Aziz, A. Diane Williams, First Daughter and ceremony M.C. Jaymi Sterling, Commissioners Amanda Rodriguez, Roseanna Vogt, Cynthia Lifson and Debbie Risper. Bottom Row: Lucille Ward Walker (for Sue Ward), Major General Linda Singh, Mary Feik, First Lady Yumi Hogan, Congresswoman Beverly Byron, Dr. Maria Knoll (for Dr. Kathleen O'Brien) and Jill Tietjen, CEO, National Women's Hall of Fame, for Dr. Gail de Planque.

On March 19, 2015 the Maryland Commission for Women and the Women Legislators of the Maryland General Assembly inducted six extraordinary women into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame at a ceremony in Annapolis.

The Maryland Women's Hall of Fame was established in 1985 as a joint initiative of the Commission for Women and the Women Legislators to recognize and honor Maryland women who have made unique and lasting contributions to the state and to provide an archive of their biographies. <http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/educ/exhibits/womenshall/html/whflist.html>

Since 1985, more than 150 Maryland women have been inducted into the Hall of Fame. This year's theme was "Ordinary women, extraordinary lives." The six honorees were:

- **Beverly B. Byron**, U.S. Congresswoman (MD-06, 1978 – 1992)
- **Gail de Planque**, Ph.D., Nuclear Engineer *Posthumous*
- **Mary S. Feik**, Aviation Engineer
- **Katherine O'Brien**, M.D., Pediatric Epidemiologist
- **Major General Linda L. Singh**, Adjutant General, Maryland National Guard
- **Sue Fryer Ward**, Secretary, Maryland Department of Aging (1998 - 2003) *Posthumous*



Members of the Commission for Women with Governor Larry Hogan

Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr. and First Lady Yumi Hogan opened the events at Government House with a reception in honor of the inductees. The Induction Ceremony followed in the Miller Senate Office Building, attended by an audience of nearly 200. **Jaymi Sterling**, Esq., daughter of the First Lady and Governor Hogan served as Mistress of Ceremonies. **Senator Roger Manno** sponsored the MCW's use of the Conference Room and welcomed the crowd. **Secretary Sam Malhotra** brought greetings from the Department of Human Resources and presented the Governor's proclamation of Women's History Month in the state of Maryland.

Dr. Kathleen White, Chair of the Maryland Commission

for Women welcomed the attendees and introduced the members of the commission. She and Secretary Malhotra presented the awards to each of the honorees. **Marsha Wise**, Executive Director of the Women Legislators of the Maryland General Assembly presented a plaque inscribed with the honorees' names to **Diana Bailey** for permanent display at the Maryland Women's Heritage Center.

Each honoree was presented with a crystal bowl award, a citation from the Governor and citations from Senators Barbara Mikulski and Ben Cardin, and from Congressmen Chris Van Hollen and Steny Hoyer.



Jaymi Sterling, Mistress of Ceremonies

The 2015 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame was sponsored by the:

Maryland Commission for Women
 Friends of the Maryland Commission for Women
 Women Legislators of the Maryland General Assembly
 Maryland Department of Human Resources
 Brunson Cooper

Necole Parker
 Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA)
 Capital Structures Real Estate LLC
 Life Crisis Center

Encouraging Leadership in Young Women **2015 Women of Tomorrow Awards**

Co-Chairs: Debbie Risper and Lorna Forde

Members: Lee Bachu and Pat Cornish



Women of Tomorrow Planning Committee Co-Chairs, Lorna Forde (far left) and Debbie Risper (far right) with MCW Chair Dr. Kathleen White, honorees Julia Lizik, Maria DeFeo, Samirah Brown, Tiffany Alexandra Ramcharan and Sydney Anderson with Major General Linda Singh.

The Maryland Women of Tomorrow Awards program was established in 1997 to recognize and to honor extraordinary young women who have demonstrated a commitment to leadership, community service and academic excellence. Each year, the Commission for Women calls for nominations from educators, community, scout and religious leaders from across the state. An independent committee reviews all the nominations and makes the very difficult decision of selecting two honorees in three categories: grades 7 and 8; grades 9 and 10, and grades 11 and 12.

This year, the Maryland Commission received 24 nominations, from 23 schools in 10 counties. All described extraordinary young women. The task of selecting the honorees from among the many highly qualified candidates fell to six individuals: Commissioners Diane Williams, Betsy Ramirez, Cynthia Lifson, Diane Fink, Toni Sandridge and former commissioner Lynn Fitrell.

The young women selected for this award were:

Grades 7 – 8

Julia Lizik, Honoree
Crestwood Middle School, Frederick County

Payton Steele, Honorable Mention
Shiloh Middle School, Carroll County

Grades 9 – 10

Maria DeFeo, Honoree
Westminster High School, Carroll County

Samirah Brown, Honorable Mention
Northern High School, Calvert County

Grades 11 – 12

Tiffany Alexandra Ramcharan, Honoree
Tuscarora High School, Frederick County

Sydney Anderson, Honorable Mention
Huntingtown High School, Calvert County



Samantha Blizzard, Special Assistant to the DHR Secretary, addresses the audience



Adjutant General Linda Singh



Commissioners Lorna Forde and Wandra Ashley-Williams



Commissioners Wandra Ashley-Williams, Anita Riley, Debbie Risper, Betsy Ramirez and Lee Bachu with Major General Linda Singh



2014 honoree and 2015 Presenter Delanee-Alexis Coley

More than 75 individuals gathered for the awards ceremony and dinner at the Sheraton Annapolis Hotel. Samantha Blizzard, Special Assistant, brought greetings from DHR Secretary Sam Malhotra.

The audience heard an inspiring and compelling keynote address by Major General Linda Singh, the first woman ever to head the Maryland National Guard. She and each of this year's honorees were introduced by Delanee-Alexis Coley, who received the Women of Tomorrow award as an 11th grade student in 2014.

The event is sponsored by the Maryland Commission for Women and the Department of Human Resources. The planning committee also developed additional sponsors, and the Commission extends its sincere gratitude to each of the corporate sponsors contributing to the success of this event:

Gold Sponsor:

Friends of the Maryland Commission for Women

Silver Sponsor:

PNC Bank

Bronze Sponsors:

PEC Financial Consulting
Christol Salon and Spa, Clinton, MD/Salon Christol,
Upper Marlboro, MD
Aria Travel Service.LLC

Gift Bag Sponsors:

Crabi Gras, St. Michaels, MD
Edward Jones (Nick Martinez)
Free Balance
The Graduate School, USA
International Consortium on Governmental Financial
Management (ICGFM)
Maryland Women's Heritage Center
PEC Financial Consulting
PIAZZZZ, St. Michaels, MD
Take Me Home, St. Michaels, MD

Improving Access to Health Resources **Health and Wellness Committee**

Chair: Dr. Homayara Aziz

Committee Members: Lillian Cruz, Lorna Forde, Helen Holton

At the September MCW Planning Meeting, the Health and Wellness Committee set for itself the goal of developing an extensive list of links to health and wellness information resources to be published on the MCW website, and accessible to all women of the state.

The plan was to identify at least 12 important women's issues that could be synchronized with nationally designated "health months;" to research web-based resources, and create a "year of women's health and wellness resources" with active links for each.

Altogether, 20 health issues were identified and arranged by months whenever there was a related designation (October is "National Breast Cancer Awareness Month," for example). A total of 88 links to online resources were found, carefully reviewed, and a directory of these is now published on the MCW website at:

http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page_id=15139. The topics covered are:

January

- Cervical Health Awareness Month
- Thyroid Awareness Month

February

- American Health Month

March

- National Endometriosis Awareness Month
- National Nutrition Month

April

- Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

May

- National Women's Health Week
- National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month
- National Osteoporosis Month
- National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

June

- Urinary Tract Health

July

- Skin Cancer Prevention

August

- National Immunization Awareness Month
- National Breast Feeding Awareness Month

September

- Women and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
- National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day

October

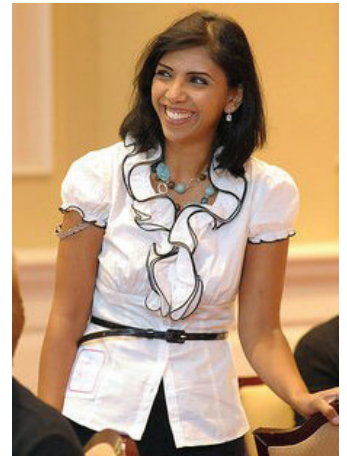
- National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month

November

- American Diabetes Month

December

- Women's Mental Health Resources



Dr. Homayara Aziz

The on-line resource directory may be expanded and updated as new information becomes available and new health concerns are identified.

In addition to the work on the directory, Committee Chair, Dr. Homayara Aziz, participated as a panelist in a seminar on "Senior Women and Long-Term Care" at the 2015 Women's Legislative Briefing, and Commissioners Cynthia Lifson, with expertise in domestic violence policies, and Amanda Rodriguez, with expertise in human trafficking policies, were panelists in the seminar on "Health and Safety for Women and Girls" at the same event.

Reaching Out

Public Relations and Communications Committee

Chair: Lillian Cruz

Committee Members: Betsy Ramirez and Nicole Drew



The Communications Committee set as its goal for the year to increase awareness of the Commission's activities through its official website and social media channels. This challenge involved four initiatives:

Update the MCW website:

The Commission's website was badly out of date and much in need of attention. Extensive work was done on the content and organization of the site www.marylandwomen.org, located on the website for the Maryland Department of Human Resources. Accurate and current information about each of the commissioners is now posted and updated as necessary. Extraneous or inaccurate data about other programs was eliminated and in

several cases, replaced with links to those programs' own websites (Women's Law Center of Maryland, Maryland Women's Heritage Center, Maryland Women's Hall of Fame pages on the Maryland State Archives site, for example). An exceedingly outdated directory of resources for women was replaced with a link to the Maryland Community Services Locator site, which is maintained by the University of Maryland and has extensive and current listings of services and resources for people in need throughout the state. Timely reports on the MCW's activities and programs were posted, and old data removed. Correct information was gathered on each of the local commissions for women in the state and posted on the MCW website as well, with links to those CFW's own websites where possible. MCW meeting dates, minutes and annual reports are now posted on the website. The Communications Committee worked in concert with the Health and Wellness Committee to create a directory with links to online resources for information about 20 women's health issues. All of this, and much more, was designed to make the MCW website not only a source of accurate information about the MCW, but a resource to visitors to the site, providing easily accessible and useful information and resources on a variety of issues of special concern to the women of this state.

Establish a Social Media Presence for the MCW

As social media has become an important communications tool, it was incumbent upon the MCW to have a working social media presence. At some point a Facebook page had been established for the MCW but it had become inactive and not useful. The Communications Committee created a new Facebook page for the MCW with current information about the MCW activities.

Create a Communications Plan Outlining the Responsibilities of the Committee

The Committee has developed guidance for posting content to the MCW website and Facebook page:

Guidance for MCW Website Posting: Commissioners or committees with content to post on the MCW website must send a request to the Communications Committee, the MCW Chair, and the Executive Director. Once the content is finalized, the Executive Director will work with DHR's Office of Technology Services to post the information. The Communications Committee will confirm with the requestor that the content has been posted within a 72-hour period.

Guidance for Social Media Posting: A commissioner or committee with content to post on the MCW Facebook page must send the request to the Communications Committee, the MCW Chair, and the Executive Director. The commissioner serving as the MCW Facebook coordinator will post the content when it has been approved. The Committee will confirm with the requestor that the content has been posted within a 72-hour period.

Design a Communications Kit with Brochure and Talking Points

The committee created an interim one page, front and back, "brochure" describing the MCW and its current year's priority issues and activities for immediate use by commissioners and for distribution at public events. Hundreds of these documents were given to visitors at the MCW's exhibit table at such events as the Women's Legislative Briefing. A more formal, three-panel brochure has been drafted and reviewed by the MCW. Professional graphic design will be applied and the document should be available sometime in early FY 16.

Strengthening the Structure of Our Work

Bylaws Review Committee

Chair: Diane Williams

Members: Nicole Drew, Roseanna Vogt

The Bylaws Review Committee initiated a comprehensive review of the MCW bylaws for its meetings and activities. The Committee was specifically charged with the development of a policy proposal governing the participation in official MCW meetings via telephone or teleconferencing, and the committee set for itself six initiatives for the year:



1. Carefully and thoroughly review the current Bylaws taking into consideration the Commission's enabling legislation, state law and policy governing the operations of state advisory boards with special attention to policies for call-in participation in meetings.
2. Prepare a draft of the Bylaws with language from enabling legislation removed
3. Identify areas that need further discussion
4. Contact other state boards and commissions to determine best practices, and
5. Propose new bylaws with provisions regarding call-in participation and any other areas the committee determines need revision, submit to full commission for approval.

After surveying other Maryland state advisory boards and Commissions for Women in other states, the Committee developed a policy proposal for teleconferencing that was approved at the April 2015 MCW meeting. In addition, the Committee worked to remove language that restated the MCW's enabling legislation from the bylaws. The extensively revised bylaws with these changes were approved at the MCW's June 25 meeting.

The Committee noted a number of areas that still require consideration to ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the MCW's enabling legislation and recommends further work on this initiative in FY 16.

Supporting Women in Transition

2014 Women Moving Forward Conference

**Maryland Correctional Institute for Women
Jessup, Maryland
October 11, 2014
Liaison: Roseanna Vogt**



Sponsored by organizations across Maryland, including flower clubs, exercise centers, large and small businesses, the 2014 Women Moving Forward (WMF) Pre-Release Conference was held in partnership with the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women, the Maryland Commission for Women (MCW), the National Association of Women Judges, and other organizations interested in providing support to 150 female prison inmates who are within six to nine months of eligibility for release from the correctional institute in Jessup, Maryland. Commissioner Roseanna Vogt and Carolyn Mattingly, former MCW Chair, served on the 2014 steering committee planning this event.

The WMF Conference provides workshops on issues such as job interview skills, parenting, and addiction problems. This year's keynote speaker was a 41-year-old woman who spent half of her life in prison for a violent crime committed in her youth, and who is now an advocate for returning women. Seminars featured women who have successfully transitioned home, a business attire fashion show, lunch, and a resource fair. In addition to sending a commissioner to the planning meetings, the Maryland Commission for Women (MCW) contributed a number of items and a conference bag for the attendees.

Carolyn Mattingly tragically lost her life days before the 2014 WMF conference. It was because of her that the MCW became involved in WMF in its inaugural year in 2008. While she was serving as Chair of the MCW, she secured a seat for the MCW on the WMF steering committee and continued her involvement every year since, as treasurer and chief fund raiser of the event. Mattingly made a special point of making sure there was a red carpet for the fashion show and that the women had new journals to write in every year.

In Memoriam



The Maryland Commission for Women was deeply saddened by the tragic and senseless death of its former Chair, Carolyn Mattingly, on September 30, 2014, and extends its most sincere sympathies to her family, friends and colleagues.

Many knew Carolyn as a strong and effective advocate for women and girls throughout the state of Maryland. She dedicated her time and service to the Maryland Commission for Women from 2005 to 2009, serving as its Chair, 2007 - 2008.

Under her leadership, the MCW undertook research and advocacy on such issues as health and domestic violence, women's economic equity, incarcerated women, and single mothers, and had a strong legislative program as well.

Carolyn Mattingly cared very much about the women and girls of Maryland. She will be sorely missed.





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*An office of the
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Maryland's Human Services Agency

