

Installation of Ventura County Commission for Women Officers

July 25, 2011

Executive Committee:

- Chairperson Lee Riggan role model: Amelia Earhart
- Vice Chairperson Diana Goodrow role model: Eleanor Roosevelt
- Recording Secretary Ana Cristina Flores role model: Harriet Tubman
- Treasurer Jan Lawrence role model: Madame C. J. Walker
- Corresponding Secretary Ina Howard role model: Mother Teresa

What does Ventura County Commission for Women mean to you?

What does Ventura County Commission for Women mean to you? I suspect many words and images come to mind. Working women ... women helping women ... workplace equity issues ... pay equity ... work-life balance ... friendships ... meetings mentors ... leadership ... dedication ... legacy ... opportunity ... commitment.

Perhaps you think of special Commission for Women signature events:

- Advocacy & Education of Ventura County Women,
- Ambassadorship,
- Women's History Resolution
- Domestic Violence Awareness Education, and
- Researching the Status of Women & Girls in Ventura County in partnership with CSUCI.

The Commission for Women is an advisory organization that can mean different things to different people, but at its core, the Commission is its mission - to encourage, support and facilitate the empowerment and education of Ventura County Women. The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors on issues impacting and relating to women and families, and serves to coordinate efforts with federal, state, and local community groups to improve the quality of life for women and families. Tonight as we celebrate the closing of one year and launch a new one, as we celebrate our heritage and our future, we reaffirm our focus on the mission.

We call to arouse all Commissioners to a feeling of their own solidarity and importance; to the realization that all Commissioners, in their aims, their handicaps, and their limitations are one; to the conviction that all women throughout the world, in their ideas must be one; and only as we solve our own problems and make our most dynamic contribution to the group at large can we measure up to the challenge of this new day.”

The “challenge of this new day” is to take the best of the past and build on it for a better tomorrow. The best of the future is before us. We eagerly anticipate our future, but it’s not yet here. We must create our future by living in the present and giving our best efforts every day. Tonight, the promise of the Commission for Women’s legacy is in our hands. Tonight we celebrate our heritage and our future

The Officers you have elected will lead us into the future through their best efforts. But leaders are useless ... without followers. They can do little without the rest of us. So while we celebrate the transition into a new year and honor the new leadership, tonight also provides an opportunity to affirm our support and to commit our own best efforts.

Members

MEMBERS, you represent all the women throughout the county. Individually each of us is like a single stick ... easily broken. But united in a bundle, we have strength beyond our numbers. Our strength, as an organization, comes from the commitment of each member.

As Edward Everett Hale said:

“I am only one. But still I am one.

I cannot do everything. But still I can do something.

And because I can not do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can.”

I challenge you to re-dedicate your commitment to the Ventura County Commission for Women. I challenge you to support the leaders that you have elected with your own best efforts. I challenge you to DO the something that you CAN.

COMMISSIONERS, will you do what you can to support these leaders and commit your best efforts to achieve Ventura County Commission for Women's mission? If so, please say, "YES!"

Audience responds: "YES!"

Thank you.

Corresponding Secretary

Will the Corresponding Secretary Ina Howard please come forward?

Ina Howard, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu ["Gohn-ji boy-ya-jee-oo"] was born August 26, 1910 in Macedonia. At twelve she felt the desire to spend her life for Gods' work and joined the Sisters of Our Lady of Loreto, who were very active in India. She chose the name Sister Teresa ["terr-EE-sah"]. At the age of 27 she was named headmaster of a secondary school close to one of the great slums of Calcutta. She could not close her eyes to the misery around her. She felt she had to leave the convent to help the poorest of the poor and live with them. She was 38 when she traded her religious Loreto robe for a cheap white and blue sari.

One day a former student of Sister Teresa from a well-off family wanted to stay with Sister Teresa and help her. Others followed. The basic rule of the Missionaries of Charity is that the sisters devote themselves, out of their free will, to the service of the poorest of the poor. Today over 5000 sisters, brothers, and volunteers run approximately 500 centers worldwide, feeding 500,000 families and helping 90,000 lepers every year.¹

Remember these words from Mother Teresa. "God has not called me to be successful. He has called me to be faithful."

¹ <http://home.attbi.com/~motherteresasite/mother.html>

“People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered;
forgive them anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; succeed
anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; build anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;
do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you've got anyway.”

Ina Howard through the written word, you will represent the Ventura County
Commission for Women to Local Organizations, State organizations, National and
International organizations, and the external community of men and women. Through
your timely and efficient handling of correspondence may those to whom you write
receive a favorable impression of the Ventura County Commission for Women. Be
faithful. Give the best you have. Devote yourself to the service of the Commission. It
may not be enough, but give the best you have anyway.

Ina Howard do you promise to carry out the duties of Corresponding Secretary
to the best of your ability and give your best efforts to achieve Ventura County
Commission for Women's mission?

Corresponding Secretary responds, “I do.”

[If a gift, flower, or token of office is presented, insert reference here.]

On behalf of all the Commission members, I declare you duly installed as
Corresponding Secretary.

Will the Treasurer Janina J. Lawrence please come forward?

Janina J. Lawrence, MADAM C. J. WALKER died in 1919, sixty-one years before the Commission was founded. She was an entrepreneur, philanthropist, and social activist. As she described herself, "I am a woman who came from the cotton fields of the South. From there I was promoted to the washtub. From there I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair goods and preparations.... I have built my own factory on my own ground." One of the first American women of any race or rank to become a millionaire through her own efforts, she summarized her business success, "I got myself a start by giving myself a start."²

Born Sarah Breedlove in 1867, both Sarah's parents were ex-slaves, sharecroppers on a Louisiana farm. She became an orphan at age 7, married at fourteen, had a daughter, and was widowed at twenty. For eighteen years, she supported herself and her daughter by working as a washerwoman.

She invented her hair softener for use with a straightening comb by African American women who wanted to de-kink their hair. The Madame C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company, headquartered in Indianapolis provided employment for some 3,000 persons. Her multi-level sales force had more than 20,000 agents. Madame Walker's aggressive marketing strategy combined with relentless ambition led her to become the first known African-American woman millionaire, perhaps the first self-made American woman millionaire. She became an inspiration to many black women.

Janina J. Lawrence, you have been "promoted" from your previous service to the office of Treasurer. You got a start, by giving yourself a start. Where you came from ... is not nearly as important as where you are going. Nothing is more fundamental than integrity. Like Madame Walker, you have the opportunity to inspire thousands. Through sound business procedures, you must safeguard all funds. Your presentation of financial reports should be clear, simple, and correct. Accurate records and

² New York Times Magazine, November 4, 1917

promoting a supportive membership are central to on-going financial stability. I charge you to be the steward of the Commission for Women's financial integrity.

Janina J. Lawrence do you promise to carry out the duties of Treasurer to the best of your ability and give your best efforts to achieve the Ventura County Commission for Women's mission?

Treasurer responds, "I do."

[If a gift, flower, or token of office is presented, insert reference here.]

On behalf of all the Commission members, I declare you duly installed as Treasurer.

Recording Secretary

Will the Recording Secretary Ana Cristina Flores please come forward?

Ana Cristina Flores, Harriet Tubman was born a slave in 1820 near Cambridge, Maryland. When she heard that her deceased master's property would be sold, she escaped to freedom in Pennsylvania. Once she discovered what it was to be free, she wanted to help other people to freedom. Through the use of the "Underground Railroad" Harriet made 19 trips south, rescuing more than 300 slaves. It was very dangerous work. At one point, the reward for Tubman's capture was \$40,000. Her flexible but effective method of leading slaves out of the South was successful because she was a master in planning the strategy of each of her escape operations. No detail was missed. Known as the "Moses of her people," she never lost a passenger. As Tubman herself said, "On my Underground Railroad I never run my train off the track and I never lose a passenger."

After her death in 1913, Tubman was buried with military honors in Fort Hill Cemetery, only a few miles from Seneca Falls. Her tombstone reads, "Servant of God, Well Done." She has received many honors including the naming of the Liberty Ship Harriet Tubman, christened in 1944 by Eleanor Roosevelt and a commemorative postage stamp bearing her name and likeness.

Ana Cristina Flores, as Recording Secretary you are the modern historian who will record the efforts of this Commission to show that "women mean business." You will record the details of many successful activities in 2011 and 2012. Minutes are historic, but minutes are also time-sensitive. Get them done and move on.

Like Harriet Tubman, use flexible but effective methods to stay on the right track. Plan carefully and don't miss any details. May Harriet Tubman's epitaph summarize your service to the Commission for Women this year - "Servant of God, Well Done."

Ana Cristina Flores, do you promise to carry out the duties of Recording Secretary to the best of your ability and give your best efforts to achieve the Ventura County Commission for Women's mission?

Recording Secretary responds, "I do."

[If a gift, flower, or token of office is presented, insert reference here.]

On behalf of all the Commission members, I declare you duly installed as Recording Secretary.

Vice Chairperson

Will the Vice Chairperson Diana Goodrow please come forward?

Diana Goodrow, un-elected, yet wielding enormous influence, Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the 20th century's most admired women. Concerning suffrage Eleanor wrote, "I became a much more ardent citizen and feminist than anyone ... would have dreamed possible. I had learned that if you wanted to institute any kind of reform you could get far more attention if you had a vote than if you lacked one." Later, she wrote, "... years have now gone by and everywhere people are asking, 'What have the women done with the vote?' I often wonder why they don't ask the men the same question, but I realize that it is a high compliment to women that evidently they were expected to bring about some marked change in political conditions ..."

When her husband became president in 1933, Eleanor discovered that she had talents—for public speaking, for organizing, for articulating social problems. As First Lady, she held more than 300 press conferences that she restricted to women journalists, knowing that news organizations all over the country would be forced to hire their first female reporter in order to have access to the First Lady.

Both in private and public life, Mrs. Roosevelt manifested an unequalled concern for others. She was an ardent advocate of equal rights and an uncompromising voice on civil rights. Of her personal involvement in causes, she said, "... I have never felt that anything really mattered but the satisfaction of knowing that you stood for the things in which you believed and had done the very best you could." Her integrity, her graciousness, and her sincerity of purpose endeared her personally to many millions.

Diana Goodrow, like Eleanor, you have talents for public speaking, for organizing, and for articulating social problems. You, too, are an ardent feminist and express your opinion candidly. Most of all, you share with Eleanor Roosevelt the commitment that nothing really matters but the satisfaction of knowing that you stand for the things in which you believe and that you do the very best you can.

Let your integrity, graciousness, and sincerity of purpose endear you to the members. The Commission for Women's story is not over. We have many more years of notable service to render. Your leadership will help answer the question, "What have the women done?"

Diana Goodrow, do you promise to carry out the duties of Vice Chairperson to the best of your ability and give your best efforts to achieve the Ventura County Commission for Women's mission?

Vice Chairperson responds, "I do."

[If a gift, flower, or token of office is presented, insert reference here.]

On behalf of all the Commission members, I declare you duly installed as Vice Chairperson.

Chairperson

Will the Chairperson Lee Riggan, please come forward?

Lee Riggan, Amelia Earhart first flew the Atlantic solo exactly five years to the day after Charles Lindbergh made his solo flight across the Atlantic. She planned her 1937 around-the-world flight to be her last major flight. "Preparation, I have often said, is rightly two-thirds of any venture." On June 1, 1937 she and her navigator set out to travel eastward around the world. On July 2 having flown 22,000 miles she had only 7,000 miles left. At twenty and one-fourth hours into twenty to twenty-one hours of fuel, her last radio message was received. Nine naval ships and 66 aircraft were unable to find any trace of her. She knew the dangers inherent in the trip and left letters for her family to open, if she did not return. Her letter to her husband George read: "Please know I am quite aware of the hazards. I want to do it because I want to do it. Women must try to do things, as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others."

Amelia Earhart spoke words that challenge not only those of her time, but also challenge us today.

"Some of us have great highways to follow. If you do, that is nice, but if not, then know that it is your responsibility to pick up a shovel and build a road for those coming on behind you."

And, "Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace."

Lee Riggan, the office of Chairperson is the natural leader of the whole organization. Yes, there are hazards out there. But your preparation can overcome them. And you know ... your landings should exactly match your take offs. So it is in the Commission for Women ... finishing is frequently harder than starting. The heaviest responsibility is upon you and you can see the greatest rewards. The heritage and future of the Commission for Women is entrusted to you. We look to you for vision, example and leadership. We pledge our active support and encouragement.

Lee Riggan, you have prepared for this day. We know that you want to be Chairperson, because you want to do it. We know that your success will be a challenge and an encouragement to others. May you have the courage to chart a new course and to build a road for those coming on behind you.

Lee Riggan. do you promise to carry out the duties of Chairperson to the best of your ability and give your best efforts to achieve the Ventura County Commission for Women's mission?

President responds, "I do."

[If a gift, flower, or token of office is presented, insert reference here.]

On behalf of all the ^{VCCW}~~BPW~~ members, I declare you duly installed as 2011-2012 Ventura County Commission for Women's Chairperson.

Members, greet your new officers ...

[END]