

2024

Women of Distinction

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Event Schedule

Welcome

Mary Pat King

Chief Executive Officer of Girl Scouts of West Central Florida

Traditional Girl Scout Flag Ceremony

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida Media Girls

Gratitude & Recognition

Cami Gibertini

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida Board President

Women of Distinction Recognition

Diana Walker

Woman of Promise Honoree

Marilyn Alvarez • Alison Barlow • Gen. (Ret.) Ann E. Dunwoody • Bemetra Simmons

2024 Women of Distinction Honorees

Renée Vaughn

Hall of Fame Inductee

Impact of Girl Scouts

Stephen Ponzillo

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida Board Secretary

Caroline

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida Girl Scout

Girl Scout Story

Elaine Feaster

Gold Award Girl Scout

Closing

Mary Pat King

Chief Executive Officer of Girl Scouts of West Central Florida



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Letter from our CEO & Board President

Welcome to the 2024 Women of Distinction Awards Luncheon!

For 32 years, Girl Scouts of West Central Florida has celebrated the astounding achievements of women leaders in our community through this annual event. We are so happy that you are joining us today to recognize six remarkable women who have dedicated their lives to making the world a better place.

This year, Girl Scouts of West Central Florida honors: **Marilyn Alvarez, Alison Barlow, Gen. (Ret.) Ann E. Dunwoody, and Bemetra Simmons** as Women of Distinction; **Diana Walker** as Woman of Promise; and **Renée Vaughn** as a Women of Distinction Hall of Fame Inductee.

This extraordinary group of women serve as the next generation's role models. They are dedicated champions for lifting up women and youth to ensure the future is brighter for all. Leading by example, they inspire Girl Scouts from across our council to be go-getters, innovators, risk-takers, and leaders who serve their communities with compassion.

For the past 111 years, Girl Scouts has proven to be the premier leadership development program for girls, globally. We know that the bonds of sisterhood formed through Girl Scouts last a lifetime and create a strong sense of self for girls. Furthermore, we know that it takes dedicated female leaders as mentors to build girls of courage, confidence, and character.

On behalf of the Girl Scouts of West Central Florida Board of Directors, we would like to recognize our 2024 Women of Distinction Honorary Chairs who poured so much energy into bringing this day to life—**Maruchi Azorin, Doretha Edgecomb** and **Ellie Paladine**.

We hope that you are inspired by the stories of our Women of Distinction honorees, our amazing Girl Scout Alumna **Elaine Feaster** and our Girl Scouts sitting among us today. Thank you for showing your commitment to girls by supporting Girl Scouts of West Central Florida.

Yours in Girl Scouting,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Pat King".

Mary Pat King
Chief Executive Officer
Girl Scouts of West Central Florida



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cami Gibertini".

Cami Gibertini
President
Girl Scouts of West Central Florida

2024

Girl Scout

Story



Elaine
Feaster

Elaine Feaster is a GSWCF Gold Award Girl Scout Alumna and 2023 graduate of Freedom High School in Tampa, Florida. She is currently an undergraduate student at the University of South Florida, with hopes to become a high school social science teacher.

During her high school years, Feaster participated in various extracurricular activities. She was a member of the National Honor Society, multiple clubs, the volleyball team and, of course, Girl Scouts.

She was diagnosed with dyslexia at a young age, which fueled her passion for literacy. For her Gold Award project, she created “ScoutingForBooks.com,” a comprehensive literacy resource website, and “Book Buddy,” a literacy resource packet that was distributed to 34 elementary schools throughout the Tampa Bay area. Feaster also donated a total of 11,500 books to children in Title 1 schools—furthering her mission to foster a love for reading in young minds.

Recognizing her dedication to academic achievement, leadership and service, Feaster’s prestigious Gold Award project earned her the 2023 GSUSA \$10,000 Gold Award Scholarship and the GSWCF Ann Hensler scholarship.

2024

Women of Distinction Honoree

**Marilyn
Alvarez**



Master Deputy Marilyn Alvarez has worked for the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office for 26 years. She has worked on assignments in Patrol, Street Crimes, School Resource and Crimes against Children. For the last 18 years, she has been the Sheriff's Office Hispanic Liaison, serving as the bridge between the Sheriff's Office and the Hispanic community.

Master Deputy Alvarez is a leader in the community. She serves on several boards, such as The City of Tampa Mayors Hispanic Advisory Council and the Tampa Bay Area Refugee Task Force. Alvarez also serves as an advisor to the Sheriff's Hispanic Advisory Council and as a mentor through the Hispanic Professional Women's Association for the 2023-24 school year.

During her time off, Alvarez volunteers at local churches and with the Diversity Action Coalition, Inc.

Alvarez received the 2008 Hispanic Deputy of the Year Award from the Sheriff's Hispanic Advisory Council and the 2016 Deputy of the Year from All American Productions Viva Tampa Bay Festival 2016. In 2017, she was named the Tampa Hispanic Heritage Inc.'s Woman of the Year and, in 2019, she received the Premios Enfoque Leadership Award for Community Service.

Alvarez also received a commendation from the Hillsborough County Board of County Commission and proclamations from former City of Tampa Mayor, Bob Buckhorn, and the School Board of Hillsborough County.

2024

Women of Distinction Honoree



Alison
Barlow

Alison Barlow is the Executive Director of the St. Petersburg Innovation District (SPID). The mission of the SPID is to develop St. Petersburg into an environment that fosters job growth, economic development, learning and inspiration by bringing innovative people and organizations together.

She works with SPID partners to forge new career opportunities, grow businesses and entrepreneurs, and increase investments in healthcare, marine science, data analytics and education. She leads several initiatives including the Maritime and Defense Technology Hub, the St. Pete Science Festival and the community's Smart City technology pilots.

As a St. Petersburg, Florida native, Barlow received a bachelor's in hospitality administration from Florida State University, and a Master of Business Administration from American University in Washington D.C.

For the first half of her career, Alison Barlow was a technology and business consultant based in Washington D.C., supporting federal government clients. Upon her return to Florida and prior to joining the Innovation District, she was the Operations Manager and Lead Facilitator of Collaborative Labs at St. Petersburg College.

Alison Barlow is a graduate of Leadership St. Petersburg and serves on the boards of the Grow Smarter Alliance, University of South Florida Research Foundation, and Friends of Strays Animal Shelter.

2024

Women of Distinction Honoree

Gen. (Ret.)
**Ann E.
Dunwoody**



Ann E. Dunwoody is a retired general of the U.S. Army, having dedicated 37+ years of service to our country. In 2008, General Dunwoody earned the historic distinction of being the first woman in U.S. Military history to achieve the rank of four-star general.

In her last assignment, she led and ran The Army Materiel Command, the largest global logistics command in the Army.

General Dunwoody has been recognized by the NCAA with its highest honor, the Theodore Roosevelt Award; by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association with its Lifetime Achievement Award; by France with its National Order of Merit; and in 2016, with the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. She has been recognized by SUNY Cortland as a Distinguished Alumnus, received the Jerome P. Keuper Distinguished Alumni Award from the Florida Institute of Technology, and in 2018 was inducted in the inaugural class of the 82nd Airborne Division Hall of Fame. In 2019, the West Point Association of Graduates selected her for the prestigious Sylvanus Thayer Award.

2024

Women of Distinction Honoree



**Bemetra
Simmons**

Bemetra Simmons is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Tampa Bay Partnership, a coalition of regional business leaders working together to improve the personal and economic well-being of Tampa Bay residents.

She is also Co-Founder of Corporate Homie, a career, lifestyle, and advice company and podcast dedicated to assisting professionals in navigating the waters of corporate America.

Simmons previously served as the Chief Strategy and Operations Officer for United Way Suncoast. As a former banking executive, she also worked as the Florida Managing Director at Mutual of Omaha Bank.

She currently serves on the board of commissioners for the Tampa Housing Authority, the executive committee for the Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce and the Community Tampa Bay board. The Tampa Bay Business Journal named her an “Up and Comer” in 2013 and a finalist for its Businesswoman of the Year award in 2017. She is also a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Simmons and her lovely wife Abeba live in Tampa with their dog, Charlie.

2024

Hall of Fame Inductee

Renée
Vaughn



Renée Vaughn is President of the Williams Consulting Group, a Tampa based public relations and marketing firm. Prior to the Williams Consulting Group, Vaughn was a Senior Administrator for the City of Tampa.

Vaughn is a member of Leadership Tampa Alumni, Leadership Tampa Bay (former president), Red Cross Angels (former president), and the University of Tampa Board of Fellows (former chair member). She was the chairman of the Leadership Tampa class of 2014 and the 2016-17 Chair of the Circle of Red for the American Heart Association.

Vaughn is a member of the Chiseler's, the H.B. Plant Museum Society, the Moffitt Merit Society, Hospice Women of Philanthropy, the International Women's Forum, Athena Society, the Tampa Museum of Art Board of Directors, The Centre for Women's League of Exceptional Women and Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church.

In 2021, the Tampa Bay Lightning Foundation honored Vaughn as a community hero for her many years of extensive community service and leadership.

Married to the University of Tampa President, Ron Vaughn, Renée Vaughn serves as the first lady of the University and is very involved in supporting the University's mission through her numerous social, community and campus activities.

Vaughn was first recognized as a Woman of Distinction in 2015.

2024

Woman of Promise Honoree



Diana
Walker

Diana Walker is the Special Projects Coordinator of Hillsborough County MBE & SBE Programs. Walker oversees construction contract compliance of MBE participation, provides educational training on how to bid with the County, and assists businesses with the MBE/SBE certification application.

Walker earned her bachelor's degree in business management from the University of South Florida and has lived in Tampa Bay for over 10 years. Her passion for entrepreneurship and giving back to her community is shown by her involvement on the Hispanic Professional Women's Association and Foundation Board of Directors, as Vice-President of the Tampa Bay Latin Chamber of Commerce, and as an active participant of Status of Latinos (SOL) at the University of South Florida.

Coming from a family of entrepreneurs and from her previous roles at FSMSDC and Prospera, Walker has assisted and consulted with business owners on how to start and grow their business.

She graduated from Leadership Hillsborough, Class of 2023 and was recognized for her civic engagement by the Tampa Hispanic Heritage Inc, Leadership Class of 2023.

2024

Women of Distinction Honorary Chairs



Maruchi Azorin



Doretha Edgecomb



Ellie Paladine

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida is grateful to our 2024 Women of Distinction Honorary Chairs who have all been honored previously as Women of Distinction and Hall of Fame Inductees.

Thank you to [Maruchi Azorin](#), [Doretha Edgecomb](#), and [Ellie Paladine](#), for continuing to be champions for Girl Scouts and all women leaders.



Thank You

THE UNIVERSITY
OF TAMPA

and

Renée Vaughn



Thank You to
The University of Tampa and
its First Lady Renée Vaughn
for sponsoring and hosting the
2024 Women of Distinction
Honoree Reception at the
University of Tampa Vaughn
Center on January 11.

It was a beautiful evening for past
Women of Distinction Honorees
to meet and welcome the 2024
Women of Distinction.

Women of Distinction

The Women of Distinction Event began in 1992 to recognize the importance that female role models play in the lives of young women. This distinguished group of past Women of Distinction honorees continue to provide inspiration, leadership, and support for girls served by Girl Scouts of West Central Florida.

Jan Abell, 1995*
Emeline Acton, 1998
Melanie Adams-Miller, 1992
Marion C. Albanese, 1992
Lavonne Alberti, 1992
Betty Alfano, 1992
Mary Wyatt Allen, 1992*
Karen Arch, 1995
Rosemary E. Armstrong, 2017
Kathleen Assimack, 1992
Beverly A. Austin, 2007
Maruchi Azorin, 2010
Helen V. Baines, 1992
Sally L. Baldwin, 2005*
Joanne M. Baldy, 1998
Lucille Barcellona, 1992
Fran Barford, 1992
Beverly Barnett, 2001
Carol J. Barnett, 2008*
Heather Barrow, 2014†
Dorothy Beach, 2019
Sarah Beasley, 2011
Jeanette Benfield, 1995
Trimeka Benjamin, 2023
Gracia Bennish, 1997
Catherine Bessant, 2001, 2019*
Susan B. Betzer, 1994
Colleen Bevis, 1996*
Mabel H. Bexley, 1995
Dee Blanchard, 1992
Susan Blanchard, 1998
Sara L. Bowen, 1997
Helen Brandell, 1992
Karen Brandell, 1992
Shelley Broader, 2007
Gayle Brooks, 1992
Elsie S. Brown, 1996*
Rebecca A. Brown, 1999*
Karen Brown Dunlap, 2005
Kim Brubaker, 1996
Esther G. Bryant, 1992
Susan C. Bucklew, 1996
Janet Burdeno, 1992
Maira J. Burke, 1992
Phyllis Busansky, 1999*
Sylvia D. Campbell, 2001, 2023*
Lisette Campos-Perez, 2018
Maria P. Cantonis, 2007
Carol Cargill, 1992*
Sylvia M. Carley, 1992*
Betty Lee Carlton, 1995*
Willa Carson, 2001*
Marilyn A. Carter, 1999
Kathalin Carvalho, 2023
Janice B. Case, 1996
Betty Castor, 1999*
Jane Castor, 2011
Alice C. Changstrom, 1998*
Colleen Chappell, 2020
Kathy B. Church, 1992
Susan Churuti, 2010
Veronica Cintron, 2023†
Louise Clarke, 1992
Denise Coburn, 1992
Lucy D. Cole, 2000
Shirley Coletti, 1994
Elaine M. College, 1995*
Janice C. Collier, 1997
Chloe Coney, 1996
Altrichia A. Cook, 2016†
Mary E. Corbett, 1992
Lenore "Gundy" Costello, 2015
Irmina Couret, 1992
Molly Crews, 2014
Gail A. Crosby, 1992
Faye B. Culp, 1997
Gay Culverhouse, 1992
Maureen Daly, 2002
Phyllis Davis, 1995
Wanda Davis, 1992*
Maria J. De Q. Azorin, 1995
Sandra Delancey, 1992
Robin DeLaVergne, 2012
Susan E. Dellinger, 1996
Arlene DiBenigno, 2019
Mallory Dimmitt, 2023
Deirdre Dixon, 2012
Erin Dossdourian, 1992
Gladys E. Douglas Hackworth, 2006
Ann M. Doyle, 1998
Nettie Draughon, 1994*
Fentrice Driskell, 2018†
Holly H. Duncan, 2003
Dorothy E. Ebersbach, 1996*
Ruth B. Eckerd, 2005*
Joan Eddy-Brigham, 1994
Doretha Edgecomb, 2017
Winifred Ekman, 1992*
Pat Engelhardt-Provence, 1994
Amy Epstein, 1998
Jackie A. Everidge, 1994
Mary Jim Everidge, 1992*
Sharon Everidge, 1996*
Jeanette LaRussa-Fenton, 1996
Angeles Ferlita, 2008
Rose V. Ferlita, 2009
Cecelia Ferman, 1995
Yolanda Fernandez, 1992
Liana Fernandez Fox, 1999, 2018*
Diana D. Ferreira, 1992
Adelaide G. Few, 1997
Chloe Firebaugh, 2018
Patricia Flores, 1994*
Evelyn Follit, 2015
Patricia C. Frank, 1996
Joanne H. Frazier, 1999
Sandra Freedman, 1994
Corinne Freeman, 1994*
Mary M. Freeman, 1992*
Yvonne Fry, 2016
Alexandra Frye, 1996
Cynthia Gandee Zinober, 1996
Adrienne M. Garcia, 2002
Rita Garvey, 1996
Judy Genshaft, 2006
Felecia Gilmore-Long, 2022
Jean Gibson, 2012
Donna E. Glausser, 1992
Stephanie Goforth, 2018
Louise Gonzalez, 1992
Margarita Gonzalez, 1992
Adela Gonzmart, 1994*
Shirley Goodchild, 1992
Helen Gordon-Davis, 1995*
Jeanne G. Gossman, 1992
Melanie S. Griffin, 2017†
Dotti Groover-Skipper, 2014
Cheryl Guldenschuh, 1998
Elizabeth Gutierrez, 2022
Patty Haislop, 1992
Susan C. Hale, 1992
Martha R. Hall, 1997*
Kim A. Hanna, 2001
Arndreeta L. Harris, 1994
Felicia Harvey, 2013†
Hazel S. Harvey, 1993
Kathy Hayes, 1992
Wanda Hayes-Riddick, 1997*
Paula Heald, 1992
Diana Heath, 1996
Ann Hensler, 1992*
Lois Henton, 1992
Mercedes Hernandez, 1992
Ann Hildebrand, 1992
Sally S. Hill, 2009
Alma S. Hires, 1992*
Connie Hogan, 1992
Doris Hogan, 1992
Mary Rose Holmes, 1996
Julianne Holt, 1997, 2022*
Charlene E. Honeywell, 2001
Martha Hood, 1998
Pam Iorio, 2004
Karen Jacobs, 1995
Diane Jamai, 1996

Julie Janssen, 2009
 Delma Jay, 1992*
 Adelle V. Jemison, 1992
 Katurah Jenkins-Hall, 1994
 Marie Johnson, 1992
 Tina P. Johnson, 1994
 Joyce Johnston, 1999
 Joanna Jones-Tokley, 1992
 Lisa Jorda, 1992
 Arthenia L. Joyner, 1995, 2019^o
 Liz Kennedy, 2009
 Kathryn L. Kepes, 1996
 Nelly N. Khouzam, 1992
 Kim Kirchman, 1992
 Barbara Knowles, 1992
 Kathleen K. Koch, 1992
 Jean M. Kohler, 1992
 Susan Kolker, 1997
 Robin C. Krivanek, 1992
 Gladys M. Kuhn, 1992*
 Carolyn J. Kurtz, 1999
 Teresa Kusmierczyk, 1992
 Terry L. Lamberson, 1992
 Beverly Lane, 1999
 Connie Lange, 1992
 Marian Lauria-Davis, 1992
 Rhea Law, 2023
 Lee Leavengood, 2003
 Claire M. Leboeuf, 1996
 Terri Lipsey-Scott, 2019
 Judith Lisi, 2011
 Gwin A. Londrigan, 2012
 Rita Lowman, 2019
 Catherine Lynch Buckhorn, 2017
 Irene Maher, 2000
 Jeanne Malchon, 1995*
 Phyllis Marshall, 1994*
 Sadye Martin, 1994*
 Dorothy Mason, 2000*
 Vanessa Maternowski, 2022^f
 Roxann Mayros, 2000
 Sylvia McCardel Thomasson, 1992*
 Jeane A. McCarthy, 1994
 Catherine McGarry, 2000
 Julianne C. McKeel, 2000
 Paige McRight, 1992
 Mary Melvin, 1992
 Karen R. Mertes, 2015
 Elise Minkoff, 2013
 Dorothy S. Mitchell, 2005*
 Judy A. Mitchell, 1998
 Karen Moffitt, 1992
 Annetta Monroe, 1992*
 Carolyn Morgan, 1992
 Carol Morsani, 2010
 Paddy K. Moses, 1992
 Patricia B. Moss, 2003
 Audre P. Mossberg, 1999*
 Patricia Mulieri, 1998*
 Pamela Muma, 2016
 Sandra L. Murman, 2004
 Ann L. Murphey, 1995*
 Heather A. Nagy, 1994
 Ginny Nash, 1992
 Vanessa Negron Cohn, 1992
 Geri Nelson, 1992
 Pamela Neuhaus, 1995
 Karen Nicolai, 1992
 Cam Oberting, 1997

Ardie Paetz, 1992
 Elinor J. Paladine, 1992
 Alma Palonis, 1992*
 Bess Paloumpis, 1992*
 Jeanette Parke, 1992
 Sallie Parks, 2018*
 Mary Parlett, 1994
 Pallavi Patel, 2006
 Betty Patton, 1999
 Eunice M. Penix, 1995
 Jane Peppard, 2000
 Elaine Perry, 1992
 Kathleen Peters, 2020
 Peggy Peterman, 1992*
 Joy Petit, 1995
 Ruth Pierson, 1992
 Fay Pino, 1992
 Barbara J. Pittman, 1992
 Jan K. Platt, 1992^{o*}
 Ann Porter, 1997
 Debra Prewitt, 1995
 Mary Preziosi, 1992
 Gaile Rametta, 1992
 Patricia B. Randall, 1992
 Carolyn B. Reed, 1999
 Jeanette G. Renfrow, 1995
 Adelaida D. Reyes, 1994
 Marion R. Rich, 2002^o
 Nancy M. Ridenour, 2014
 Patricia B. Riggs, 1997
 Anne H. Rimbey, 1997
 Eleanor J. Rimes, 1994
 Jessica Rivelli, 2020^f
 Marion S. Rodgers, 1992*
 Anna Rodriguez, 2016
 Barbara B. Romano, 1996
 Margarita Romo, 2000
 Robin L. Rosenberg, 1998
 Barbara L. Rosenblum, 1992
 Marjorie Rothermel, 1992
 Thelma P. Rothman, 2007*
 Christa Rowe, 1992
 Jacquelyn Rozman, 1992
 Ardith C. Rutland, 1992
 Shirley Ryals, 1992^f
 Marsha G. Rydberg, 1992
 Sherry Sacino, 1996
 Linda Saul-Sena, 1992
 Cathy E. Schmidt, 1992
 Elvena Schmugge, 1992
 Virginia J. Scott, 1992
 Mary Scriven, 1994
 Karen W. Seel, 1999^o
 Betty S. Sembler, 2000*
 Amy G. Shimberg, 2002*
 Elaine F. Shimberg, 1994
 Gayle Sierens-Martin, 1995
 Jane Siling, 1998
 Shirley Simmons, 1998
 Rose G. Sims, 1995
 Adelaide A. Sink, 1994, 2020^o
 Bonnie B. Sitko, 1992
 April Smith, 1992
 Dorinda Smith, 1992
 Juel S. Smith, 1994
 Rebecca J. Smith, 1997
 Sally P. Smith, 1992
 Melissa Snively, 2016
 Elithia V. Stanfield, 1992
 Marsha Starkey, 2008*

Frances L. Stavros, 2003*
 Deborah A. Stephens, 1992
 Gwendolyn W. Stephenson, 1999*
 Sara Charles Stevens, 1996
 Mary Ann Stiles, 1996
 Deborah Stone, 1996
 Marcia G. Storm, 1992
 Irene Sullivan, 2022
 Margaret Sullivan, 2011
 Jacqueline L. Swanson, 1992
 Natalie Taliaferro, 1992
 Akiko Tanaka, 2000
 Lorna Taylor, 2013
 Phyllis Taylor, 1992
 Sherrie Teddy, 1998
 Stella F. Thayer, 1995
 Sally Thompson, 1996
 Cathy Tileston, 1992
 Seretha Tinsley, 2010
 Candy Tremmel, 1992
 Celeste K. Valdez, 1999
 Renée Vaughn, 2015
 Jenna Venero, 1997
 Sylvia H. Walbolt, 1995
 Bette S. Walker, 1998
 Martha Rudy Wallace, 2006
 Laura L. Waller, 1992
 Robin Warren, 2013
 Leslie Waters, 2014
 Joe Elena Weachter-Heinz, 1992*
 Doris L. Weatherford, 1996
 Lauren Weiner, 2020
 Margaret Whaley, 1996*
 Deborah J. White, 2017
 Tonjua Williams, 2020
 Belinda F. Wilson, 2004
 Judy Wilson, 2013
 Marilyn J. Wilson, 1992
 Mildred Wilson, 2000*
 Marian S. Winters, 1992
 India Witte, 2022
 Jean G. Wittner, 2008
 Belinda Wornack, 2001
 Gwynne A. Young, 1997
 Diane A. Zwicker, 1994
 Rachel Zysk, 2019^f

Deceased*
Woman of Promise^f
Hall of Fame^o

2024 In Memoriam

Mary Wyatt Allen

Woman of
 Distinction 1992

Dr. Alma Hires

Woman of
 Distinction 1992
 Hall of Fame
 Inductee 2016

Patricia Mulieri

Woman of
 Distinction 1998

Marsha Starkey

Woman of
 Distinction 2008

A History of Women of Distinction

In 1992, Girl Scouts USA celebrated their 80th anniversary and introduced a National Women of Distinction honor to the celebration. Councils throughout the country began recognizing women who had made extraordinary accomplishments in their communities. Locally, the first Suncoast Council Women of Distinction event nominated women from our membership. The event focused on career opportunities, as the Women of Distinction held panel discussions for Girl Scout members.

Former Hillsborough County Commissioner Jan Platt was instrumental in moving the Women of Distinction recognition to the next level in 1994. That year, a committee was introduced to solicit nominations, a special reception to honor the women was held, and the women received a recognition pin created by a local artist. The focus also shifted toward a mentoring program for Girl Scouts working to achieve their Gold Award.

Over the next few years, the event solidified its importance within the community. Sponsors came forward to help recognize these outstanding women while supporting the Girl Scouts. In 1995, Gayle Sierens, co-anchor of the evening news for WFLA, came on board as the Emcee, a tradition that would last for the next 15 years, and gave the event local television coverage.

From 1992 through 2001, Girl Scouts recognized close to 250 women. As the event became increasingly popular locally in 2002, the Women of Distinction reception became an annual signature fundraising luncheon. Additionally, the number of women recognized for the award each year was limited to four to increase the prestige of the recognition.

A key component in making this move a success was introducing a keynote speaker. The first woman in space, Sally Ride, was our first keynote speaker.

She started a long tradition of esteemed speakers, including Jenna Bush Hager, Leeza Gibbons, Jane Goodall, Soledad O'Brien, Alma Powell, Mary Lou Retton, Jehan Sadat, Jane Seymour, and Marlo Thomas, who spoke at the annual awards ceremony.

In 2013, an additional honor was introduced, the Young Woman of Promise, to honor a deserving young woman under 40. In 2016, the Women of Distinction Hall of Fame honor was created to recognize former Women of Distinction recipients who continued their passionate service to the community long after receiving their initial award.

In 2020 and 2021, the event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Girl Scouts pivoted to host a virtual series of Trefoil Talks with past Women of Distinction and other women leaders to inspire Girl Scouts and early career alumnae. Today, we celebrate 32 years of honoring extraordinary women with this prestigious award.

Special Thanks

to the volunteers who shared this rich history:

Marion Rich

2002 Woman of Distinction *and*
Hall of Fame Inductee, Lifetime Girl Scout
and long-time GSWCF Board Member

Jean Kohler

Retired Lt. Col. Jean M. Kohler
1992 Woman of Distinction *and* Lifetime
Girl Scout *and* Past President of Suncoast
Girl Scouts Council *and* Board Development
Committee Member



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We're proud to support those
who dream of a brighter future.



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TBBW
TAMPA BAY BUSINESS & WEALTH

*Congratulations to the
2024 Women of Distinction
Honorees!*

*Role models for the
leaders of tomorrow*

Tampa Bay Business & Wealth (TBBW) Magazine

The fusion of business and lifestyle that connects Tampa Bay leadership through exclusive experiences.

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CONGRATULATIONS

The University of Tampa congratulates Renée Vaughn, the University's first lady, as a **2024 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE**.

As a proud sponsor of Girl Scouts of West Central Florida, UT also congratulates:

WOMEN OF DISTINCTION: Marilyn Alvarez | Alison Barlow | Ann Dunwoody | Bemetra Simmons

WOMAN OF PROMISE: Diane Walker



Renée Vaughn

The University of Tampa offers a rich undergraduate and graduate educational experience through 200 academic programs with outstanding faculty, diverse international programs, experiential education, co-curricular learning, leadership programs, community service and a vibrant campus environment.

ut.edu

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OF TAMPA



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**Raymond James is proud to give back to the communities
in which we live and work by supporting Girl Scouts of
Central West Florida.**

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The Orenda Collective
proudly celebrates the
2024 Women of
Distinction Honorees.
Each of you have made
Tampa Bay a more
equitable and inclusive
place to live, work, and
play.

Thank you!

*LaKendria Robinson,
Founder + CEO*

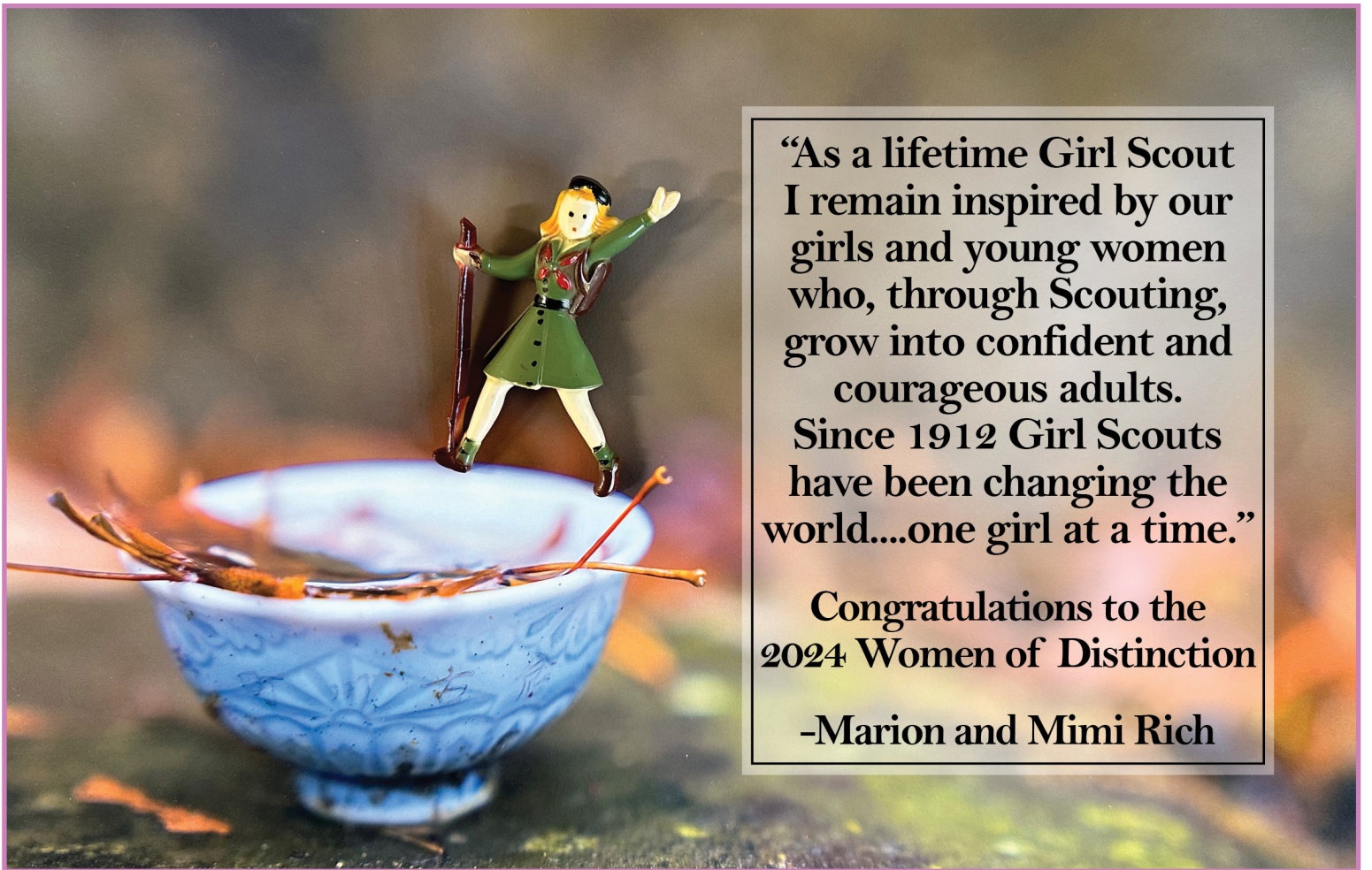
The Orenda Collective



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“As a lifetime Girl Scout I remain inspired by our girls and young women who, through Scouting, grow into confident and courageous adults. Since 1912 Girl Scouts have been changing the world....one girl at a time.”

Congratulations to the 2024 Women of Distinction

-Marion and Mimi Rich

Congratulations to the 2024 Women of Distinction!

Thanks for all you do to make our community great.



T A M P A - X W A Y . C O M



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THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA CONGRATULATES THE 2024 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION HONOREES!



UNIVERSITY of SOUTH FLORIDA
Office of University Community Partnerships

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MORE POWER TO YOU,

GIRL SCOUTS OF WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA & 2024 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION HONOREES

Well done! You make our world a better place.
Your courage, confidence and character energize us.




Celebrating


My Aunt & Girl Scout Troop Leader, Jossie de Q Azorin!

Girl Scout Troop Leader since 1963
Woman of Distinction 1995

Forever grateful,
Maruchi Azorin, MBA
Woman of Distinction 2010
Woman of Distinction Honorary Chair 2024



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Helios is committed to ensuring all students, particularly low-income and underrepresented students in Florida, are prepared to succeed in college.

Learn more at helios.org



Thank You to our Celebrated Sponsors

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**Mary Pat &
Eric King**



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**Lauren
Weiner***

* Women of Distinction Alumnae

Save the Date

**November 9,
2024**

Camp Wai Lani
Palm Harbor, FL

Empower & Inspire:

We're calling all professional women to participate in Camp CEO as a coach or sponsor to inspire the next generation of Girl Scouts! Dive into a day of leadership development, career planning, and goal-setting, all while enjoying classic camp fun (s'mores included).

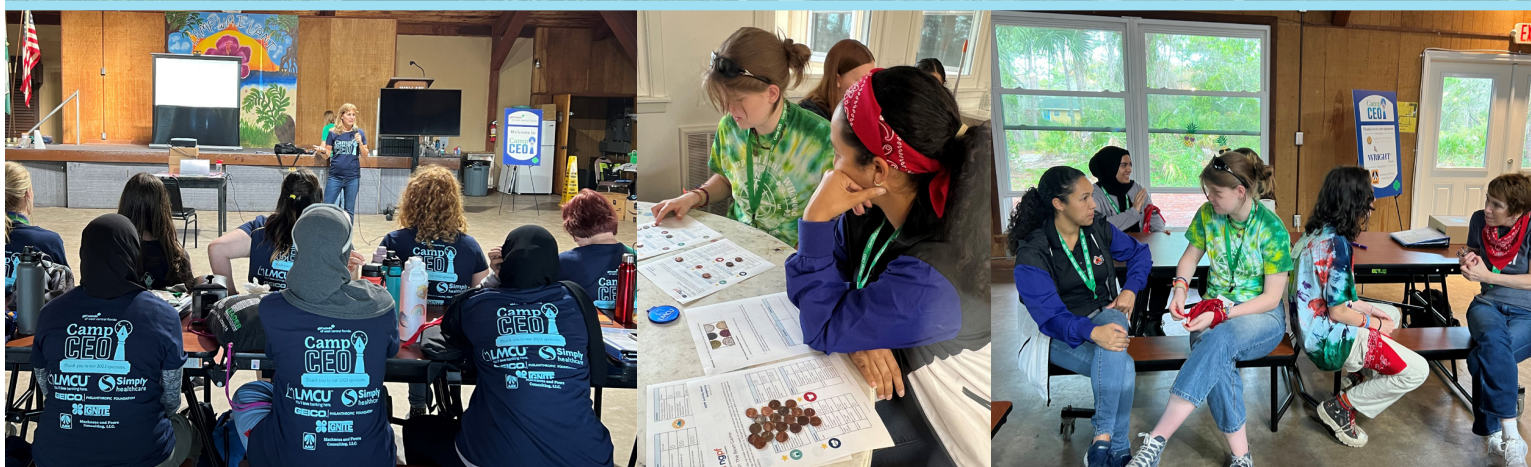
Get Involved:

- **Be a Coach:** Make an impact & share your wisdom with tomorrow's female leaders.
- **Become a Sponsor:** Open doors to lifelong friendships and the possibilities available with Girl Scouts.

girl scouts 
of west central florida

Camp  CEO

50 WAI-LANI



Interested
in being a
coach?
Scan here.



Contact Clara Moll
for sponsorship inquiries at
cmoll@gswcf.org



Your Year of Discovery



- ✓ Explore a new museum.
- ✓ Play a favorite outdoor game.
- ✓ Sing a funny song with your friends.

Join Today



When you see the world through her eyes, it's more vibrant than ever. Get the whole family involved for another year of Girl Scouts and extraordinary memories that will last a lifetime!

girl scouts
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Save the date!

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

The Hilton Hotel, Downtown Tampa

12:00 Noon

2024 Latinos Unidos Luncheon

25th Anniversary Celebration

Showcasing the rising influence and economic impact of Hispanics in our Tampa Bay area, our state, and our nation. Leaders from the corporate or non-profit sector are invited as keynote speakers to the luncheon. All net proceeds of the event support local Hispanic students with certified financial need.

[Mayor's Hispanic Advisory Council | City of Tampa](#)



Ways to Give



Donate Today: www.gswcf.org/give

Juliette Gordon Low Society

The Juliette Gordon Low Society was established to honor individuals who have included Girl Scouts of West Central Florida in their estate plan. It is comprised of a diverse group of donors across a wide range of ages and income levels who have one common connection—a desire to ensure that Girl Scouting makes a strong and vital impact for years to come.

If you would like to learn how you can become a member of the Juliette Gordon Low Society, please contact **Clara Moll, Chief Development Officer** at **813-262-1768** or **cmoll@gswcf.org**.



Daisy's Circle
Bring her promise to life

Named after Girl Scouts founder Juliette “Daisy” Gordon Low, **Daisy's Circle** is Girl Scouts of West Central Florida's monthly giving program designed to cultivate philanthropy among friends, members, alumnae, and volunteers of Girl Scouts. Funds raised through Daisy's Circle ensures every girl in our eight-county footprint has a high quality Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Daisy's Circle members receive a unique Daisy's Circle pin and monthly member newsletter. To join Daisy's Circle visit **gswcf.org/daisycircle**





Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
one is silver, and the other, gold.

A circle's round, it has no end,
that's how long I'm gonna be your friend.

A fire burns bright, it warms the heart,
we've been friends, from the very start.

You have one hand, I have the other,
put them together, we have each other.

Silver is precious, Gold is too,
I am precious, and so are you.

You help me, and I'll help you,
and together, we will see it through.

The sky is blue, the Earth is green,
I can help, to keep it clean.

Across the land, across the sea,
friends forever, we will always be.

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida
4610 Eisenhower Blvd. Tampa, FL 33634
1-800-881-GIRL (4475) *or* 813-281-GIRL (4475)
www.gswcf.org

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong,
and responsible for what I say and do,
and to respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.



Nominations *are* Now Open!
www.gswcf.org/wod



Thank You *for* Supporting Girl Scouts of West Central Florida

www.gswcf.org/give