



2020

MARYLAND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

# Annual Report

JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020



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## THE MARYLAND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

The Maryland Commission for Women was first established in 1965 and set in state law in 1971. An office in the Department of Human Services, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose legislative mandate includes the following duties:

- Study the status of women in our state
- Recommend methods of overcoming discrimination
- Recognize women's accomplishments and contributions
- Provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state
- Direct attention to critical problems confronting women

Commissioners are appointed by the Governor to four-year terms, with confirmation by the Maryland State Senate, and serve without compensation.

### July 2019 – 2020 Commissioners

Yun Jung Yang, Chair	Patricia M. Lambert
Tawanda A. Bailey, First Vice Chair	Bonnie Nelson Luna
Carole Jaar Sepe, Second Vice Chair	Brenda J. McChriston
Tammy Bresnahan	Ishrat N. Memon
Deborah L. Cartee	April Nyman
Gloria Chang	Roberta Pardo
Maureen G. Colburn	Luanne Ruddell
Amanda L. Costley	Corinna Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen
Melissa Hough Curtin	Evelyne S. Steward
Essita R. Duncan	Ummu Bradley Thomas
Kristi S. Halford	Tamara England Wilson
Eugenia B. Henry	Marylou N. Yam
Lauren M. Lambert	

### Staff:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Tammy Wise, Management Associate  
Fatara Odifa, Administrative Officer  
Bev Thoms, Volunteer  
Letitia Araujo, 2019 Summer Intern

## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

*Maryland Department of Human Services  
Lourdes R. Padilla*



There has perhaps never been a year more challenging than this. I am so proud of all the hardworking, dedicated and skilled members of the Department of Human Services team who understood that the people we serve needed us more than ever and who have contributed so much to ensure that we continue to meet their needs despite multiple nationwide crises over the past several months.

The Maryland Department of Human Services is the state's primary social service provider, serving more than one million people annually. DHS, through its 24 local departments of social services, aggressively pursues opportunities to assist people in economic need, provide preventive services and protect vulnerable children and adults in each of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City.

DHS is also home to the Maryland Commission for Women. The Commission's role as an advocate for the women and girls of our state helps DHS fulfill its mission by serving as a valued advisor on issues including domestic violence and sexual assault, human trafficking, mothers and poverty, work and family, equal access to opportunity and much more.

We commend the Commission's work not only to recognize women's contribution to our state, but also to encourage young women to exceed expectations as they prepare for leadership in the future. Our congratulations to each of the five extraordinary women inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame, and each of the exceptional young ladies who were honored with Women of Tomorrow Awards in 2020. Although these celebrations had to be virtual this year, their significance is not diminished.

DHS appreciates the hard work, expertise and time donated by the 25 volunteer members of the Commission for Women, helping make Maryland a place where all our residents may lead productive lives as respected members of our community. We take pride in the Commission as our partner as we pursue our vision of a Maryland where people independently support themselves and their families and where every person is safe from abuse and neglect.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lourdes R. Padilla". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lourdes R. Padilla  
Secretary, Maryland Department of Human Services

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

*Yun Jung Yang, Esq.*



*“Fight for the things that you care about. But do it in a way that will lead others to join you.” -- Ruth Bader Ginsberg*

It is my honor and my duty to present the annual report of the Maryland Commission for Women, covering our work from July 2019 through June 2020. It is hard to overstate the challenges these past 12 months have presented to the nation and to the world. Throughout it all, the strong and compassionate leadership our Governor exemplified has been evident across the country. Indeed, we could not have carried on without the support of Mr. Hogan and DHS Secretary Lourdes Padilla. We extend to them both our greatest appreciation and admiration for the inspiration they present as they guide our state, and the agency charged with serving Maryland’s most vulnerable residents, throughout the multiple crises.

The Commission for Women continued its work on the Status of Women in Maryland research project and its legislative advocacy before the full brunt of the COVID-19 virus became evident. Then, in the face of the crisis, we adapted our recognition of the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and Women of Tomorrow Awards to meet the requirements of a statewide prohibition of large gatherings. We hope the five women inducted into the Hall of Fame and the five recipients of the Women of Tomorrow Award felt appropriately recognized and honored. Then, we all had to learn a great deal of new technology in order to completely change plans for the commemoration of the centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment’s passage – as the long-term effects of the pandemic became evident.

Throughout it all, I continue to be absolutely awestruck by the commitment, dedication, and exceptional talent offered by our 25 commissioners. Surely these women, like every other citizen of the state, had many pressing personal concerns exacerbated by the sudden changes: most of us had to learn to work from home, those who couldn’t work from home faced frightening health risks in the workplace, essential groceries and personal supplies became hard to find, isolation and social distancing made it difficult if not impossible to carry out our “normal” daily routines and even to see our colleagues, friends and, most importantly, family.

And yet, the Commission did not cancel a single one of its monthly meetings, and attendance was at an all-time high. We all learned to use technology – at first conference calls and now video conferencing to carry on our work as efficiently and effectively as ever. Commissioners devoted hours and hours of their personal time, even while juggling working at home, caring for and “homeschooling” children and grandchildren, and donated their considerable talents to carrying out the agenda we set for ourselves in what seems now like the completely different world of June 2019.

*“So often in life, things that you regard as an impediment turn out to be great good fortune.” -- Ruth Bader Ginsburg.*

It has been an extraordinary privilege to serve as Chair of this Commission for Women for the past two years, and then to have been re-elected in June 2020 to serve in this office for another two years. My thanks go to my sister officers, First Vice Chair Tawanda Bailey and Second Vice Chair Carole Jaar Sepe, to the chairs of the Commission’s committees, and to all our wonderful commissioners.

We began this new year celebrating our progress and grieving our losses, but also hopeful that we will turn these challenges into opportunities for growth and renewed dedication and continue our work on behalf of the women and girls of this great state.

Just as the new program year was getting started, the world lost a great leader, advocate for women’s equality, and wise justice. Ruth Bader Ginsberg, the second woman ever to serve on the Supreme Court and ardent advocate for equal rights, passed away on September 18, 2020. As we mourn her passing and remember her enormous contributions to gender equity, let us remember her words as well.

*“I don’t say women’s rights—I say the constitutional principle of the equal citizenship stature of men and women.” -- Ruth Bader Ginsberg*

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Judith Vaughan-Prather*



When this program year began on July 1, 2019, who could possibly have anticipated what the 12 months of FY 2019 – 2020 would hold in store? The Commission for Women held its annual planning meeting on June 20, 2019 to review its work over the previous year and to set its agenda for the coming year. The Commissioners adopted a busy workplan that included:

- An active Policy and Legislation (PAL) committee to conduct the Commission’s legislative advocacy in the 2020 session of the Maryland General Assembly
- The Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and Women of Tomorrow Awards program, culminating with a ceremony and reception to be held in Annapolis in March 2020
- The completion of the Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM) research project and report
- Plans for commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting women voting rights, to include a conference and reception in Annapolis on August 26, 2020, the actual date of that historic centennial, marking the largest expansion of suffrage in U.S. history.

Each of the committees established to pursue these goals worked diligently over the summer of 2019 and throughout the fall and early winter months of the fiscal year, with no idea of the dramatic crises that were to confront our nation – including a world-wide epidemic that made its previously unimaginable impact suddenly local, critical and immediate. In addition to the grief and loss of human lives, the COVID-19 crisis forced many workers out of their jobs and others out of their offices. It required the shutdown of businesses and forced the cancellation or postponement of most public events, with very little warning, beginning in mid-March 2020 and continuing beyond the rest of the fiscal year.

In the middle of the health, social and economic crisis presented by the pandemic, civil unrest arose across the nation in response to reports of racially based police brutality, bringing renewed attention to race, class and gender inequities in our societal institutions, and for many, bringing renewed and strengthened determination to address these issues.

At the beginning of March, 2020, the Commission had fully planned a ceremony and reception in Annapolis to honor five new inductees into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and five recipients of the Maryland Women of Tomorrow Award. In addition, plans were well underway for a Women’s Leadership Summit to be held in August in Annapolis. Then, on March 5, we were advised that we should not hold the Awards and Induction ceremony scheduled for March 19. On March 12, we learned that schools and most state government office facilities, including our own, would shut down, and the staff was to work from home, beginning March 13!

The MCW staff went to the office on March 13 to transfer computer files to the Google Drive, pick up laptop computers, files and supplies and make emergency preparations to begin remote operations of the office and continued support for the Commission’s work. At that time, we presumed that this would be a relative short-term arrangement and that we would be back in the office within a few weeks, but that, of course, turned out to be wrong.

Plans for the two events – the Awards and Recognition Ceremony and the 2020 Summit – for which so much work had been done, had to change dramatically. Up to that point, the Commission itself had always met in person in Annapolis with limited provisions and capacity for participation via telephone. The April 2020 Commission meeting was held via conference call, but by May, we had all learned the new technology of virtual meetings, and the MCW meeting that month was conducted using Google Meet. All Commission meetings since then have been held on that platform, and work proceeded online on the Commission’s projects.

The reports of each of the four committee's activities will follow, and despite the multiple crises occurring nation- and world-wide, and in some cases in response to those crises, the Commission for Women carried on its work in other areas as well:

- In July, 2019, the Executive Director attended the annual conference of the National Association of Commissions for Women in Chicago where she was a presenter in two seminars and finished up her final term on the board of directors.
- On August 11, the Chair and Executive Director participated in an event sponsored by the Maryland Women's Heritage Center in Baltimore.
- In October, a Women's Suffrage Centennial Commemoration Events Calendar was created and posted on the Commission's website, to be updated weekly as new events are known.
- At the invitation of the WED2020 Coalition, the Commission signed on to the campaign at the "Encouragement" level meaning that the MCW would help publicize events organized as part of the initiative to have local celebrations, free and open to the public, in parks across the state on the weekend before the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.
- On October 25, the Executive Director was presented the Women in NAACP award "For Service Beyond Measure" at the state conference in Ocean City.
- On October 26, the Executive Director was honored with the Woman of Achievement Award from the Maryland Federation of Business and Professional Women at its annual conference in Hagerstown.



- On November 19, 2019, several commissioners traveled to Hunt Valley, Maryland to participate in the Women of Excellence event, sponsored by the Executive Alliance, a Baltimore-based networking organization for leaders among business women.

- On Saturday, November 23, 2019, the Maryland Commission for Women convened its annual **Commission for Women Roundtable Meeting**. Twenty-five women representing nine jurisdictions participated in the meeting held at the annual Fall Conference of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

(MLAW), at the Chesapeake Arts Center in Brooklyn Park, MD. The Commissions for Women from Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Charles, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties, as well as the Maryland Commission, all sent representatives. This year, for the first time, other women who were not Commissioners, including a State Delegate to the Maryland General Assembly, asked to observe the meeting. In a conversation facilitated by the MCW Chair, the county Commissioners discussed the top priorities and challenges for their Commissions this year. The MCW Chair shared plans for the 2020 Women's Centennial Summit and invited the local Commissions to join in sponsoring the event. Commissioner Pardo presented information about the planned March 19 Women's Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow Awards Ceremony, inviting all in attendance participate. MCW Vice Chair Tawanda Bailey provided an update on the Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM) research project and Vice Chair Sepe invited the other Commissions to share information for inclusion in the 2020 Suffrage Commemoration Events Calendar the MCW was posting on its website. In addition, the 2020WED coordinator asked to present information about a planned statewide celebration of the centennial anniversary, inviting the Commissions for Women in each county to participate by organizing local events in their jurisdictions on the weekend before the actual Women's Equality Day, 2020. The meeting closed with the announcement of the National Association of Commissions for Women's Voices of Women in America survey, encouraging all the Commissions for Women to ensure that Maryland is represented by encouraging women in their communities to participate.

- On December 10, Commissioners Curtin, Memon and Yang, and the Executive Director presented a briefing on the MCW's work to the Howard County Commission for Women.
- On Wednesday, January 29, 2020, Commissioners Yang, Sepe, Bresnahan and the Executive Director joined the Women Legislators' Caucus celebration and discussion on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Women's Suffrage in Annapolis.
- Commissioners and staff participated in a legislative briefing in Annapolis on February 6, sponsored by the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW).

- The MCW Chair, at the invitation of USA Today, participated in its nationwide project to identify a “Woman of the Century” from each of the 50 states, finishing up with a meeting on February 7.
- The MCW Executive Director was interviewed by a reporter from The Daily Record about the centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment.
- On Sunday, March 1, as the pandemic clouds were gathering, the Executive Director and Chair represented the MCW at the Women’s Power Tea awards event hosted by Montgomery Women at the Black Rock Center for the Arts in Germantown.
- At the invitation of the Delaware Commission on the Status of Women, on March 2, 2020, the Commission Chair and Executive Director traveled to Wilmington, Delaware to provide a presentation on the conduct of a listening tour similar to the Voices of Maryland Women project.
- On March, 12, 2020 (the night before the state-wide ban on large gatherings went into effect), MCW First Vice Chair Tawanda Bailey was honored by the Frederick County Commission for Women as an “Up and Coming Woman of the Year” at its annual RAW (Raving About Women) Awards ceremony.
- **Response to COVID-19 Crisis:** In April, 2020 the Commission began considering how it should respond to the pandemic. In Maryland, it has held fairly constant throughout the crisis that more women contract the disease, but more men die of it. (<https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>). This may be because women are more likely to work in jobs that deal with the health crisis face-to-face, such as health care workers, grocery store clerks, child care providers, residential care facility employees) so women may be more often exposed to the virus in their workplaces.

At its May 21, 2020 meeting, the Commission received a briefing from the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, describing its research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the women of that state. Many women work in professions that do not have the option to work from home. Women also make up the majority of workers in low-paying occupations with no benefits (waitresses, hospitality workers, retail store employees, hair and nail-care professionals, for example), industries that have been especially hard hit by the “shut down” and whose employees can least afford to take leave without pay and without health insurance. Mothers, especially single mothers, face even greater challenges balancing work and family and now home-schooling as well.



**COVID-19 PPE Donation Project:** In response to this information, the Commission organized an effort in May, 2020, based in large part on the extraordinarily generous donation of Commissioner Henry, who purchased hundreds of thousands of pieces of personal protection equipment to donate to the state’s emergency management centers, first responders and non-profit organizations. She asked for the Commissions’ help in finding other organizations that would benefit from donated face masks. Chair



Yang coordinated with other commissioners to offer the donated masks to organizations serving women throughout the state. They reached out to domestic violence service providers and ethnic culture service centers around the state and arranged to donate 2000 masks to each of 17 organizations in 10 counties. This means that, through Commissioner Henry’s generosity and the outreach initiative of our commissioners, the MCW ensured that at least 34,000 facemasks were available to organizations serving some of Maryland’s most vulnerable women. Below is a list of the organizations, arranged by county, and the commissioner who facilitated the donation:

Allegany County – Chair Yang

- Family Crisis Resource Center

Anne Arundel County -

Commissioners Cartee, Nyman and Pardo

- YWCA Domestic Violence Services

Baltimore County - Commissioner Wilson

- Family Crisis Center

Carroll County - Commissioner Costly

- Family and Children’s Services of Central Maryland
- Rape Crisis Intervention Services

Frederick County - Commission Vice Chairs

Bailey and Sepe

- Health Department

Garrett County – Chair Yang

- The Dove Center

Harford County – Commissioner Halford

- SARC

Howard County – Commissioner Curtin & Chair Yang

- HopeWorks
- Dar Al Taqwa, Inc.

Montgomery County – Commissioners Memon, Steward and Yang

- National Center for Children and Families
- Muslim Community Center
- Family Justice Center
- Stepping Stone Shelter

Prince George’s County –

Commissioners L. Lambert and Colburn

- Community Crisis Services
- Family Justice Center
- CASA de Maryland

The receiving organizations uniformly expressed their deep appreciation both to Commissioner Henry for her enormous generosity and to the Commission for Women for reaching out to them, ensuring that organizations serving women have the personal protection equipment necessary to protect their staff and their clients.

- At its June 18, meeting, the Commission received a briefing from Dr. Sherita Hill Golden, Vice president and Chief Diversity Officer and Professor of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institute, discussing the impact of the pandemic on women. She noted that black and Latina women more often work in “essential worker” positions, and do not have the luxury of working from home. Many were required to work without adequate personal protection equipment, so were more often exposed to the disease. For this and other reasons, including decades of systemic racial inequalities in housing, employment, access to health care and to healthy foods, black and brown Americans have been over-represented among the COVID deaths.
- As everyone learned how to use “new” video meeting technologies such as Zoom, Google Meet and WebEx, the MCW staff participated in at least 15 webinars between March 23 and June 30. The topics ranged from “Coping with Stress and Social Isolation” (Johns Hopkins University) and “COVID-19 Health Disparities” (Johns Hopkins University), to “Women’s Suffrage History” (Woodrow Wilson House),

“Race in America” (Washington Post), “Best Practices for Working from Home” (Zoom) and “Women’s Commissions’ Response to COVID-19” (NACW).

- In addition to all this, the Commissioners who are all volunteers, also served as liaisons to 10 other organizations, including:
  - Maryland Women’s Heritage Center
  - The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women
  - Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW)
  - 2020 Women’s Legislative Briefing Planning Committee
  - 2020 Women Moving Forward Conference at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women
  - Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group of the Maryland Department of Health
  - National Association of Commissions for Women
  - Maryland SAFE Center
  - Maryland Women’s History Museum
  - Maryland Commission to Commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of the United States
- Throughout the year, the Commission issued a total of 80 communiques to its distribution lists of more than 1400 email subscribers and 1817 Facebook followers. These messages included:
  - 17 Health Alerts
  - 11 Issue Alerts
  - 5 “News” Announcements
  - 16 Event Announcements
  - 31 Facebook Posts
- **MCW Statement on Racial Injustice**

By June, the Commission decided that the recent reports of flagrant racial injustice and police brutality made it incumbent upon organizations to take a stand. At its June 18, 2020 meeting, the Commission adopted the following statement which was published on its website, Facebook page and sent out to its distribution lists:

### **Black Lives Matter – Taking A Stand Against Systemic Racism**

*The Maryland Commission for Women supports equal justice under the law for all people, and opposes any form of discrimination or oppression for any reason. Therefore, at a time when our nation finds itself in the midst of a pandemic that disproportionately impacts African Americans, we are both horrified and disheartened that African Americans continue to be subject to systemic racism and violence.*

*The Maryland Commission for Women is deeply saddened and also outraged by the recent senseless murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. The deaths of these unarmed African Americans have shed light on the countless others, named and unnamed African Americans, whose lives were taken by police officers and/or vigilantes and compel us to stand in solidarity with the African American community and all who have issued a call for action. Too many wives have lost their husbands, too many sisters have lost a sibling, too many precious children have lost a parent and too many mothers have lost a child.*

*The Maryland Commission for Women stands in solidarity because we stand for equal justice under the law for all people. We stand in solidarity because we oppose any form of discrimination or oppression for any reason. We stand in solidarity because the lives of those murdered mattered. We stand in solidarity because Black lives matter.*

*The Maryland Commission for Women takes this stand in solidarity with all those working for an end to systemic racism, racial terror, violence, and police brutality.*

## POLICY AND LEGISLATION (PAL) COMMITTEE



**Chair:** *Tammy Bresnahan*  
**Vice Chair:** *Maureen Colburn*



**Members:**  
*Melissa Curtin, Pat Lambert, Brenda McChriston, Amanda Costley*

The law establishing the Maryland Commission for Women charges it with the responsibility to “inform the executive and legislative branches of government on issues concerning women, including offering testimony on the issues before legislative and administrative bodies. To carry out that mandate, the Commission prepared and submitted written testimony to the Maryland General Assembly in support of several pieces of legislation that impact women.

- **SB210/HB248 - Protective Orders - Relief Eligibility - Rape & Sexual Offenses:** This legislation alters the definition of a “person eligible for relief” with a domestic violence protective order to include any individual who alleges s/he is a victim of rape or a sexual offense. Peace orders provide legal protection for individuals experiencing problems with another person outside of an intimate relationship. Protective orders are stronger and longer and provide relief to victims of violence and sexual assault by an intimate partner. When a person is attacked by another in the context of a “date,” the more robust provisions of a protective order may not be available to the victim. This bill would remedy this by specifying that people who experience violence at the hands of their “date” may be eligible for a protective order. SB 210/HB 248 was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor.
- **SB225/HB523 - Employee Accommodations: Pregnancy & Childbirth:** This bill extends pregnancy discrimination laws to include women in healthy pregnancies who need reasonable accommodations in their place of work. Current law required reasonable workplace accommodations for women experiencing a disability related to pregnancy. Even in a healthy pregnancy, a woman may need certain accommodations such as avoiding exposure to potentially harmful chemicals, certain kinds of physical stressors such as lifting heavy weights, climbing or standing for long periods of time. SB 225/HB 523 was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor.
- **HB123/SB217 - Wage History and Wage Range:** The bill requires employers to provide, if asked, the potential wage range for a position under consideration which allows any applicant, whether man or woman, to have a better assessment of what is possible to ask.

It has long been established by reputable workforce research organizations, including the U.S. Department of Labor, that women’s earnings average far less than men’s, whether in the same occupation, or in occupations traditionally held by one sex or the other. Thus, when a woman applies for a new job, if the employer bases her salary offer on her current wage, she is likely to receive a lower offer than would be made to a male applicant of the same qualifications but with a higher current salary. HB 123 was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor.

- **HB0242/SB0206 - Criminal Procedure - Motion to Vacate Judgment - Human Trafficking – the True Freedom Act:** Current Maryland law permitted a judge to vacate convictions for prostitution if the victim is found to have been trafficked and thus not operating under free will. However, victims of trafficking are all too often forced by their trafficker to commit other crimes such as shoplifting and selling drugs, and have no more ability to refuse to commit these crimes than they are able to refuse prostitution while being trafficked. For victims of human trafficking, the legislation expands the number of crimes eligible for consideration for vacatur. HB 242/SB 206 both passed the General Assembly and were signed by the Governor.

- **HB0233/SB0212 - Criminal Law - Assault in the First Degree - Suffocation or Strangulation:** This law changes the criminal classification of intentional suffocation or strangulation of another in the commission of an assault. This bill reclassifies suffocation and strangulation as assault in the First Degree (Criminal Law §3-202) and recognizes strangulation and suffocation as a likely precursor to future and more extreme violence perpetrated against women. Studies have shown that prior commission of non-fatal strangulation is associated with a six-fold increase in the probability of attempted homicide. Under the current law, suffocation and strangulation were classified as Assault in the Second Degree (Criminal Law §3-203). HB 233/SB 212 both passed the General Assembly and were signed by the Governor.
- **HB0608/SB0682 - Correctional Services - Prerelease Unit for Women - Requirement to Operate:** The Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW) is the only completely female correctional facility in our state, with an estimated resident population of 875 ([www.prisonpro.com](http://www.prisonpro.com)). During the course of the MCW's two-year state-wide Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour, the Commission visited MCIW on April 8, 2017 and asked the residents to "talk to us" about their concerns, as we asked women all over the state. The single issue identified as most important by those attending was the need for a prerelease/work-release facility and services for women, separate from the prison. The participants told us that there are residential prerelease centers for male re-entry residents where they are housed separately from the other residents, can participate in occupational training, live in a less-restrictive environment, take public transportation to work, etc. There is no such facility for women. The women described a limited number of training opportunities compared to that available to incarcerated men. They listed other concerns such as having to be dropped off at prerelease worksites from a bus clearly marked as Maryland Department of Corrections, enduring the stigma of having everyone around know they are prisoners, whereas the men in community-based prerelease facilities can use public or private transportation to work and arrive as any other employee would. Incarcerated women are more likely than men to be the primary caretakers and supporters of their children, and the wisdom of preparing them to re-enter the community, the workforce and their families cannot be overstated.

In addition to submitting testimony on these bills, the MCW was a "Gold Sponsor" of the annual fall conference of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) held on November 23, 2019 at the Chesapeake Arts Center. Commissioners Bailey, Sepe, Memon, Pardo, Curtin, and Yang along with MCW staff (Vaughan-Prather and Odifa) attended. At this conference, briefings on proposals for the legislative platform MLAW would support were presented.

MCW was also a sponsor of the January 26, 2020 Women's Legislative Briefing, coordinated by the Montgomery County Commission for Women and attended by 600 women and men from around the state. Commissioners Bresnahan, Chang, Colburn, Curtin, Memon, and Sepe along with Executive Director Vaughan-Prather all attended and helped "staff" the MCW's exhibit table at the Briefing.



**Achievement and Recognition Ceremony Committee**  
**MARYLAND WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME &**  
**WOMEN OF TOMORROW AWARDS**

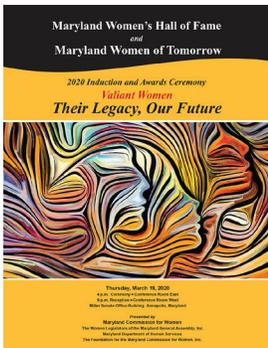
**Chair:** *Deborah Cartee*  
**Vice Chair:** *Roberta Pardo*



**Members:** *Gloria Chang, Lauren Lambert, Bonnie Luna, Ishrat Memon, April Nyman, Carole Jaar Sepe, Corinna Shen, Evelyne Steward*

The Maryland Women's Hall of Fame was established in 1985 as a joint initiative of the Commission for Women and the Caucus of Maryland Women Legislators to recognize and honor Maryland women whose accomplishments are of historic significance and to provide an archive of their biographies. Since that first year, more than 185 women have been inducted into the Hall of Fame, including inspiration of the modern environmental movement Rachel Carson, conductor of the underground railroad Harriet Tubman, founder of the American Red Cross Clara Barton, internationally renowned jazz vocalist Billie Holiday, donor of the immortal HeLa human cell line Henrietta Lacks, and former Congresswoman and Ambassador Connie Morella. The Hall of Fame also includes much less well known, but no less significant women whose work has been of enormous importance, and who would go unrecognized if not for this program. The biographies of all these women are posted permanently on the website of the Maryland State Archives: <http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/edu/exhibits/womenshall/html/whflist.html>.

The Maryland Women of Tomorrow Award was established in 1997 to recognize and to honor extraordinary young women who have demonstrated a commitment to leadership, community service and academic excellence. Nominations are received from educators, civic, community and religious leaders across the state.



The theme selected for this year was “Valiant Women: Their Legacy/Our Future.” Calls for nominations for both programs were issued on September 30 with a closing date of November 1, 2019 and for the first time, nominations were submitted completely online. For the Hall of Fame, 15 nominations were received, and 27 for the Women of Tomorrow Awards. Selection committees were formed for each program, made up of leaders from statewide women’s organizations who reviewed and rated all the nominations, met on December 3 in Annapolis, and made the very difficult decision of whom to honor:

**2020 Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame Selection Committee:**

- Joyce Duckett, Board Member, Maryland League of Women Voters
- Rachel Mygatt, Board of Directors, Maryland Women’s Heritage Center
- Margaret (Meg) Oliver, President, Women’s Bar Association of Maryland
- La’Kenya Walter, Co-President, Business & Professional Women of Maryland (BPW/MD)
- Susan Wierman, Co-President, American Association of University Women (AAUW MD)

**2020 Maryland Women of Tomorrow Selection Committee:**

- Linda Fihelly, Co-President, Business & Professional Women of Maryland (BPW/MD)
- Dr. Suzan Harkness, Associate VP for Academic Affairs, Notre Dame of Maryland University
- Catherine Hill, Executive Director, Women’s Legislative Caucus
- Michele Siri, Esq., Executive Director, Women’s Law Center of Maryland
- Kate Campbell Stevenson, Co-President, American Association of University Women (AAUW MD)

Five extraordinary women were selected for induction into the Hall of Fame:

- Community activist Victorine Q. Adams (posthumous);
- Attorney and civil rights advocate Evelyn Olivia Addison Darden;
- Climate change scientist Dr. Claire Parkinson;
- Astronomer and “Mother of the Hubble Telescope” Dr. Nancy Grace Roman (posthumous)
- Women’s and human rights activist Dr. Leslie R. Wolfe (posthumous).

In addition, five outstanding young women were selected for the Women of Tomorrow Awards:

- Jessica Holloway of Montgomery County
- Laurelle Maubert of Frederick County
- Carolyn Pascal of Frederick County
- Amulya Puttaraju of Montgomery County
- Dataya Resenois of Calvert County.

The Induction and Awards Ceremony was scheduled for Thursday, March 19, 2020; in the Miller Senate Office Building. Senator Susan Lee was the sponsor for the Commission’s use of the MSOB; Ava-Joye Burnette, weekend anchor and reporter at WJZ-13 TV had agreed to serve as MC for the ceremony, a caterer was selected, funds had been raised to support the reception and awards, publicity and registration were well underway and all plans were firmly in place by the beginning of March.

Then, the seemingly unthinkable happened. With the COVID-19 pandemic spreading across the country, the Commission was advised on March 5 to cancel or postpone the event, and the next week, Governor Hogan issued an order banning all large public gatherings.

By this time, more than 200 people had registered to attend the ceremony. It was far too late and the future far too uncertain to make other plans, so the event was cancelled. To do this, in the week between the cancellation of the ceremony and the closing of the Commission’s office, required:

- Cancelling the caterer - rolling deposit over to next year’s event
- Cancelling the M.C. and other speakers
- Cancelling the Miller Senate Office Building
- Contacting all the honorees, their nominators, and parents of the Women of Tomorrow students
- Notifying the honorees that their awards and certificates were in the MCW office and that we would arrange to get them to the honorees once we are able to access the facility again
- Contacting everyone who had registered to attend
- Notifying everyone on the Commission’s distribution lists, and
- Posting announcements on the Commission’s website and Facebook

The Commission was, however, determined that these extraordinary women and girls should not go unrecognized. Two press releases were developed and sent to the Commission’s distribution lists, one describing the Hall of Fame inductees and listing the WTA honorees, both with brief biographies of each of the honorees.

A PowerPoint presentation was created and the DHS Communications office transformed it into a beautiful [video with full biographies](#) of each of the 10 honorees; which was posted on the MCW website.

The ceremony program book was also posted on the MCW website, and copies were mailed to each of the honorees.

The Maryland State Archives posted the biographies of each of the [HOF inductees on its website](#), as it does every year, and this year, it featured one of the 2020 HOF inductees each week of March on its Facebook page.

A link to the Maryland Historic Trust Story Map on the campaign for women's suffrage in Maryland is now posted permanently on the Commission's website home page.

The crystal awards and citations from the Governor and U.S. Senator Ben Cardin were personally delivered to the home of each of the 10 honorees, or her nominator for the posthumous Hall of Fame inductees.



## STATUS OF WOMEN IN MARYLAND (SWIM) RESEARCH PROJECT

**Coordinating Team:** Yun Jung Yang, *Chair*  
Tawanda Bailey, *First Vice Chair*  
Carole Jaar Sepe, *Second Vice Chair*

The Commission for Women published the report of its Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour in August, 2018. Traveling more than 3000 miles crisscrossing the state, the Commission conducted a series of 19 public hearings and an on-line survey available in four languages, asking the women of Maryland to “talk to us” about their most pressing concerns.

To examine these issues further, the Commission decided in February 2019 to begin a study of demographic data describing the status of women in the state. The Listening Tour having been a form of opinion research, this was to be an examination of quantitative statistics gleaned from available data bases. The goal of this project is to produce a fact-based report on the Status of Women in Maryland. The information developed for the report will serve as a guide for the Commission’s advocacy on policies and legislation impacting women.

Over the summer of 2019, proposals were solicited from research firms to conduct the study. Following DHS procurement practices, the lowest-bidding firm was selected, a contract developed, a schedule of meetings with the contractor to monitor the progress of the research established, and the project was launched, with high hopes, in September. The MCW project steering committee and MCW staff met with the president of the research firm throughout the fall and first months of the new year. First and second drafts of the research report were received, reviewed submitted for revisions, but were still in need of much work. Given the emergency conditions brought on by the pandemic, the lack of progress on correcting errors in the draft report, and the need to redirect attention and resources to the suddenly changing plans for the MCW’s other projects, the contract was eventually ended with a partial payment to the contractors.

Commissioners and staff continue to work on the project with the goal of completion before the end of the 2020 calendar year, or very early in 2021. The plan for the SWIM research project remains to find, organize and publish data that will illuminate the status of women and girls in the state. calendar year, or very early in 2021. The plan for the SWIM research project remains to find, organize and publish data that will illuminate the status of women and girls in the state.





## 2020 WOMEN'S CENTENNIAL SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE



**Chair:** *Eugenia Henry*  
**Vice Chair:** *Evelyne Steward*

**Members:** *Tawanda Bailey, Deborah Cartee, Kristi Halford Corinna Shen, Carole Jaar Sepe, Tamara Wilson, Marylou Yam, Yun Jung Yang*

August 26, 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, finally after decades of campaigning, granting American women the right to vote. At its June 20, 2019 planning meeting, the Commission for Women decided to commemorate this historic occasion by recognizing and celebrating the leadership of women in the century since suffrage was won, and acknowledging how much more progress is needed to achieve full equality for all women.

A planning committee was formed, with the MCW officers, the chair and co-chair of the planning committee acting as a steering committee for the project. The Steering Committee met several times over the summer visiting potential venues for the event and meeting with The Foundation for the MCW to discuss partnership and sponsorship possibilities, with the goal of holding the conference on the actual anniversary date of Wednesday, August 26, and in Annapolis.

Meetings were held with the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) staff and the Chair of the Maryland Commission to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States (the 19th Amendment Commission). Both organizations agreed to collaborate with the MCW in organizing the Summit. It was planned that the Summit would include a special induction of Maryland Suffragists into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. Meetings were also held with youth organizations to develop sessions at the Summit designed specifically for young women and girls. The theme of the Summit was selected: From the Right to Vote to the Right to Lead.

Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates, Adrienne Jones, agreed to host the Summit at the Lowe House Office Building in Annapolis. The Governor and First Lady agreed to host a reception at the end of the day at Government House.

As originally planned, the Summit would have been a full-day event offering an opening plenary session with a keynote speaker, and then two breakout sessions featuring a total of eight seminars. The use of the House Office Building and the Governor's mansion meant that the audience size would have to be limited to no more than 225, and that no fee could be charged to the attendees.

After months of meetings and negotiations and planning, the full and long-term effects of the pandemic were becoming apparent, and by April of 2020 it seemed unlikely that an in-person event in August would be possible – even if the restrictions on gatherings were lifted by then. The choice facing the Commission was to cancel the event altogether, or find a way to commemorate the centennial anniversary virtually. In the history of the struggle for women's equality, this date seemed too important to go unrecognized.

The decision was to “pivot” the planning to a virtual, digital Summit that would still be an appropriate recognition of this historic occasion. Instead of a full-day, in-person event with limited attendance, the plan was changed to organize a three to four-hour virtual event involving a keynote address and two panel discussions. There will be

a “Parade of 100 Sheroes” scrolling during breaks, featuring Maryland women and girls who have contributed significantly to the fight against the pandemic and for racial equality in our state. The Parade will include medical personnel and first responders, teachers, clergy, and store clerks who made it possible for everyone to obtain groceries and medicines, individuals in the community who donated face masks or held food drives, and much more. Individuals and organizations across the state were invited to submit nominations. Because the event will be held online, attendance will be free and available to anyone, anywhere, who wants to join.

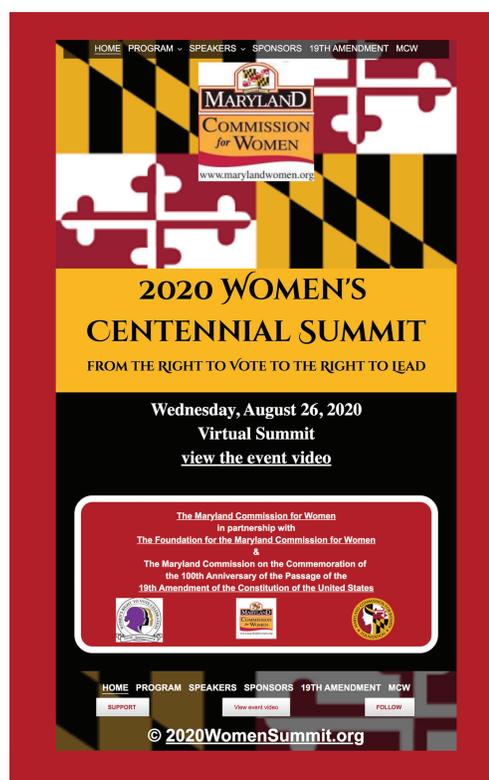
The Maryland 19th Amendment Commission, also pivoting from now-cancelled plans, became the major “Heritage Sponsor” of the Summit. Significant support also came from the Global Federation of Chinese Business Women, the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center, Westat, and others. The funds contributed by these organizations made it possible for the Foundation to contract with a technology production company to handle the technical aspects of producing the Summit.

This has been an enormous undertaking for the Commission, with a huge learning curve. The Commission had never sponsored a virtual conference before, and with only four months to make this change, the meetings of the Steering Committee were frequent and intense.

By the end of the fiscal year, the pivot from the originally planned in-person conference to a virtual summit was well underway, and the planning effort transitioned to the full Joint Summit Planning Committee, which includes representation from the 19th Amendment Commission in recognition of its \$25,100 sponsorship. Judge Mary Ellen Barbera, the first woman ever to serve as the Chief Judge on Maryland’s highest court, the Court of Appeals, had accepted the invitation to present the keynote address for the Summit. Speakers for a panel on the history of the suffrage campaign were confirmed. Almost all the invited speakers for the second panel of women thought leaders, a discussion of “Women’s Leadership and the Intersectionality of Gender and Race in Times of Crisis” were confirmed. The call for nominations for “The 100 Sheroes Parade” was sent and publicity for the event was posted on the MCW’s website and Facebook page, and was sent to its distribution lists.

Of course, by the time this report was written, the Summit had been held – and was an unparalleled success! A full report of the day-of event will be included in the annual report for 2020 – 2021.

**Wednesday, August 26, 2020**  
**Virtual Summit**  
**2020 Women’s**  
**Centennial Summit**  
**from the Right to Vote to the Right to Lead**





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Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
Lourdes R. Padilla, Secretary

