

Spring 1995

Conference Set to Establish 1996 Women's Legislative Agenda

The fourth annual conference to establish the 1996 Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women will be held on Saturday, May 6, 1995, at the University of Maryland-Baltimore Campus from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Issues of special interest to women will be discussed in addition to developing strategies for collective action on the Legislative Agenda issues affecting women and children.

Sponsored by the Maryland Commission for Women and the Maryland Statewide Agenda Steering Committee, the conference will begin with registration, a continental breakfast and networking. Workshops will include Civil Rights, Family Law, Violence Against Women and Children, Women's Health and Funding Policy (implications of State and federal funding cuts). The top concern from each workshop will be presented to the full conference in the afternoon for adoption as the **1996 Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women**.

Registration, including lunch, is \$20 per person before May 1. After that date, registration will be taken on-site at \$25. The sessions will be held in Academic Building IV on the UMBC campus in Catonsville.

Call Joanne Saltzberg or Andrea Patton for more information at 410-767-7137; TTY 410-333-0017.

FAMILY LAW CENTER NEEDS HELP

Legal assistance is expensive, but problems can hit anyone, regardless of their ability to pay. So, where can low-income persons turn for help when the need arises?

The Family Law Center in Baltimore -- currently a pilot project -- is the only general family law clinic in the state based on a sliding fee scale for persons who cannot afford current market rates for legal services. Staffed by two family law attorneys and a support staff of one paralegal and a secretary, the clinic will handle separations, divorces, child custody, property and child support matters.

Because many women, as economically dependent spouses, are the victims in the family law crisis. Unable to afford lawyers to represent them through divorce proceedings, women often lose crucial legal rights. Although the center is important to women, the community at-large benefits because legal services at the crucial point will require fewer social services to families.

In July 1993, the Women's Law Center received a \$50,000 challenge grant from the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation as seed money to establish a Family Law Center. Meanwhile, other foundations and private donors have contributed sizeable amounts in support of the project. However, the center is still about \$70,000 short of becoming a reality.

For more information about the Family Law Center, contact The Women's Law Center, P.O. Box 5362, Lutherville, MD 21094-5362; phone 410-561-7183.

Women Sent a Legislative Message: "The time is now!"

By N. Sharon Leatherman, Legislative Chair

Hundreds of supporters of the Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women took advantage of Advocacy Day in Annapolis on January 30, 1995, to voice support of their 1995 priorities loud and clear to lawmakers. That message was, "The time is now..." to pass initiatives on this year's agenda. They included: giving notice to those who violate children that they cannot hide behind probation before judgement; provide an opportunity to all newborn babies to begin life with equal access to preventive care; protect women at home; provide accessible legal recourse to individuals when discriminated against in the workplace; provide financial support of dependent children until they complete high school; give every woman financial and medical access to legal abortions; provide underprivileged and disadvantaged citizens of Maryland an adequate standard of living regardless of their ability to work to achieve independence.

Representatives from various women's organizations from around the state -- including the Maryland Commission for Women -- gathered for the afternoon orientation, press conference, agenda briefing and reception with legislators. The 1995 Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women was developed by individuals and representatives of organizations at a conference held last May at the University of Maryland Baltimore County Campus. That conference was sponsored by the Maryland Statewide Agenda Steering Committee and the Maryland Commission for Women.

Just one year ago, women met in Annapolis to present the first Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women and their families. This year, they were back in greater numbers. We're grateful to each and every person who showed their support for the agenda. Next year, we expect even more. There will always be more issues to fight for and a need for more people to let their voices be heard in support of legislation of interest to women and families.

How well did we fare with the legislature? See the next issue of Maryland Women for a scorecard.

Events Calendar

May

- 6 Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women Conference, University of Maryland, Baltimore County Campus- (410-767-7137)

July

- 19-22 NACW Annual Convention, Stouffer Harborplace, Baltimore (MCW office 410-767-7137)

For more information about events in the calendar, call the telephone numbers listed. If you have an event you would like listed in the calendar, please contact MCW Commissioner Kathy Horn at 410-535-2751.

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MARYLAND WOMEN is the newsletter of the Maryland Commission for Women, a commission of the State of Maryland Department of Human Resources.

The MCW is a State advocacy and education agency for women. Our mission is to review the needs of women throughout the State and to recommend progressive policy changes to promote economic self-sufficiency, domestic security and political empowerment.



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A Message from the Chair

"Every right achieved...was contended for inch by inch."

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1920

This year marks the 75th anniversary of women's suffrage in the United States. Throughout the country, celebrations will mark this important anniversary, but few will prompt us to recall the dedicated efforts of the women who participated in the struggle for this basic right.

For 72 years, thousands of women worked tirelessly for the right of all women to vote. They were harassed, attacked, and many were even jailed. When they protested their incarceration with hunger strikes, some were brutally force fed. Alice Paul wrote of her experience, "...It was terrifying. I said to myself, 'I have to endure this. I have got to live through this.'"

In the end, their perseverance paid off, and we all won.

It was with their struggle in mind that I reflect on the 1995 theme of the Maryland Women's History Month Project, *Promises to Keep: Suffrage and Equal Rights for Women*.

Since 1920, the struggle for equal rights has continued. Major and minor victories have been achieved through the unrelenting efforts of women working together. In the spring of 1994, Maryland women legislators and advocates came together to work for the passage of the Domestic Violence Act of 1994, an initiative of the Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women. Last November, a record number 54 women were elected to serve in the Maryland Legislature. Such achievements, should remind us that the struggles of the suffragettes continue to reap benefits for women today.

Despite these accomplishments, the reality of full equality for all women remains an unkept promise. Think about the status of gender equity in our schools, the workplace and the courts.

In remembrance of our foremothers, I encourage every woman to stop for a moment and recall these struggles and sacrifices for it is through the suffragettes that we are empowered to tackle wrongs that need righting. One way to do this is through the legislative process, which you can affect by attending the upcoming Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women Conference. (see article, p. 1; calendar, p. 4). See you in May!



Health Update

Fighting Breast Cancer Remains a Challenge

*By Pat Schroeder, M.A., Chair and Ann Marie Spellbring, PhD, RN
Women and Health Committee*

The latest figures from the health world project that this year, one in every nine American women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. For Maryland women, it has been projected that approximately 3,300 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed and 850 women will die from the disease.

It is a well-known fact that early detection is extremely important in discovering cancer of the breast, but each woman must play a role. The American Cancer Society recommends a monthly self-examination of the breast, because the majority of lumps are discovered by the woman, herself. Of these lumps, 80 percent are non-cancerous.

If a change is detected, it is essential to seek medical attention. This would, most likely, be followed by a mammogram and an exam by a health professional. Experts recommend that monthly self exams begin in late adolescence and continue throughout life. For women 50 years and older, The American Cancer Society and the American Medical Association suggest that an annual mammogram be added to a yearly breast exam by a health professional and the monthly self exam.

While the cause of breast cancer has yet to be found, there are some traits that have been identified as high-risk. These range from a family member who has had the disease, the birth of a child in the late 20's or later, an early onset of menstruation and a late menopause to a diet high in animal fats. Although some of the risks are known, there are still many cases diagnosed each year in women who have no known risk factors.

There is much controversy surrounding the treatment of breast cancer once detected, for example: removing just the lump versus removing the entire breast; the use of certain drugs to prevent cancer (such as Tamoxifen, which suppresses cancer cells that depend on estrogen for growth); and identifying the best types of anti-cancer drugs to prescribe. For example, there have been encouraging results from Taxol, a drug derived from the bark of the yew tree.

Regardless of the stages of breast cancer -- from prevention to advanced stages -- it is clear that the answers will come only from research. But, thanks to the efforts of women taking united action -- such as the National Breast Cancer Coalition -- government funding to support breast cancer research has increased. Studies supported by the National Cancer Institute show a brighter future, but experts warn that there is still a long way to go.

To contact the National Breast Cancer Coalition, write to P.O. Box 66373, Dept. P, Washington, DC 20035.

For more information, contact a local Cancer Society office or call the Maryland Division of the American Cancer Society at 410-931-6868.

Five are honored

Meet the Newest Hall of Fame Inductees

A contemporary social crusader, a former state senator, the state's first woman physician, a librarian/administrator and a nurse/humanitarian are the newest members of the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. The five were inducted during ceremonies on March 7, 1995, in Annapolis.

The 1995 honorees are:



Jill Moss Greenberg (1943-) --

Ms. Greenberg has relentlessly pursued the goal that "something can be done" about social inequities. She was instrumental in the creation of the Prince George's Commission for Women and represented the county on the Maryland Commission for Women. She played a leading role in developing the Task Force on Women with Disabilities. Because there was a lack of sufficient information about the lives and contributions of women in

Maryland's history, she founded the Maryland Women's History Project. She also helped lead the fight for passage of the Maryland Equal Rights Amendment, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and Title IX, a federal mandate to end gender discrimination in schools receiving federal funds. She embodies her philosophy that each individual can make a difference.



Mary L. Nock (1903-1987) -- Mary Nock has the distinction of having served on the Maryland legislature longer than any other woman -- from 1932 to 1972. Senator Nock was a "leader among leaders" as she doggedly pursued equality for women through involvement in major issues including: ratification of the ERA, legislation prohibiting racial discrimination, handgun control, and jury service for women. Never one to shy away from controversy, she often supported issues that would

benefit the public but could possibly jeopardize her politically. She not only survived but had the distinction of never having her legislation vetoed by any of the five governors under whom she served.



Amanda Taylor Norris (1849-1944) --

Born into a large Harford County family which owned extensive acreage and worked a number of farms, Ms. Norris was inspired to pursue a medical career after reading about the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, one of only a handful of medical schools in the country that admitted women. Following her graduation in 1880, she returned to Maryland, becoming the first woman physician in the state. She began in private

practice but was appointed to the faculty of the new Women's Medical College of Baltimore in 1882. Within four years, she had attained a full professorship in the pharmaceutical aspects of medicine. In 1891, she became a professor of Practical Obstetrics. Dr. Norris practiced into her eighties.



Nettie Barcroft Taylor (1914-) -- After serving as Supervisor of Public Libraries for 40 years, Ms. Taylor served as assistant superintendent for Libraries with the State Department of Education, the first woman to hold the position. Under her leadership, all community libraries were unified into county library systems, and state support for libraries increased from 10 cents to \$6.75 per capita. She encouraged the use of computers in libraries, helped create the Continuing Li-

brary Network and Exchange and established resource sharing throughout the State Library Network. She has been recognized with numerous professional awards, including the American Library Association's Joseph W. Lippincott Award for Distinguished Service. Now retired, Ms. Taylor remains an active advocate for quality libraries.



Euphemia Mary Goldsborough Willson (1836-1896) --

A Talbot County native, Ms. Willson moved to Baltimore where she was active during the Civil War as a nurse and humanitarian. Throughout the war, she made tremendous personal sacrifices to provide comfort and safety to wounded soldiers. Her service is especially noteworthy because there were few women nurses during the period. While nursing at the Pennsylvania College Hospital, she endured a night of

discomfort to try and save the life of Colonel Patton. He was placed against her back to ensure that his torso was kept vertical. Throughout the night, Ms. Willson sat on a cold, bare floor, numbed by the burden of his weight, but by morning he had died. Ms. Willson was a courageous pioneer in the field of nursing and an inspiration for those who would follow in the profession.

The inductees were chosen by an independent committee from nominations submitted from around the state. Members of the Selection Committee were: Marika Bates, Anne Arundel County; Georgia Adler, Talbot County; Drs. Rebecca Carroll, Elaine Hedges and Etta Lyles of Baltimore City; Dean Julie Collier, Baltimore County; Dr. Martha Cornwell, Washington County; Helen Daugherty, St. Mary's County; Marilyn Morgan, Montgomery County; Leigh Sands, Caroline County; and Donna Seibly and The Honorable Mary Louise Preis of Harford County.

Over the past 11 years, since the inception of the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame, 54 women have been honored.

For more information about the Hall of Fame, call the Maryland Commission for Women, 410-767-7137.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

IV in Trouble!

The U.S. Department of Education has requested elimination of Title IV State Education Agency (SEA) projects and reduced funding for Title IV overall. Therefore, the Commission for Women urges immediate action by all concerned with educational equity in Maryland.

State Secretary of Education Dr. Nancy Grasmick, stated in a letter to U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley that "The elimination of Title IV programs would have a devastating effect on our ability to assure equal opportunity in education for more than 900,000 students in Maryland."

Title IV programs provide training and resources on equity issues, such as monitoring and implementing federal civil rights legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, sex and national origin. Title IV programs also help schools implement policies to prevent and address sexual harassment in schools.

Please contact your local member of congress, ASAP

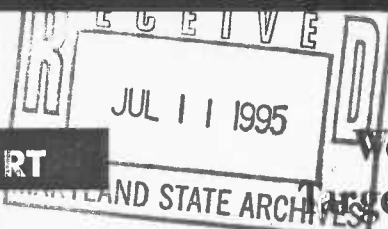
Here are some suggested points to make:

- The Title IV programs meet local needs, involve minimal paperwork and red tape and are inexpensive and cost effective (\$14 million last year for 50 state education agencies, the District of Columbia and three territories; \$7.6 million for (DAC's) Desegregation Assistance Center's) ;
- States will not pick up civil rights programs, so they will be lost without federal funds;
- Secretary Riley recently mentioned a "commitment to equity in his State of Education speech, but there will be no equity without Title IV. Both SEAs and DACs are needed because they complement each other while providing different services.

For more information, contact Joanne Saltzberg at the Commission.



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Women's Talent Bank Targets State Appointments

By Commissioner Karen Blood

Serving on state boards and commissions affords women a unique position from which to affect policy, research or oversight and allows them to build a base of support and knowledge that can lead them further into the political arena -- including elected office. But, according to *The Gender Composition of Maryland Boards and Commissions 1965 - 1993* report completed by the Maryland Commission for Women, women comprise only 33 percent of the appointed membership on Maryland state boards, commissions, committees and task forces. Also, consider this fact: 17 percent of the state's 275 boards and commissions have no female members at all.

In response to these findings, the Maryland Commission for Women is developing a Women's Talent Bank for those who wish to be considered for appointment to a state board or commission. Women's organizations around the state are being asked to help recruit potential appointees. To date, AAUW and the Maryland Women's Political Caucus have agreed to participate. Interested women will receive a copy of the Gender Composition report and checklist of suggested activities designed to enhance their possibilities of being accepted. The Talent Bank will be made available to the governor and his appointments staff.

For more information about the Women's Talent Bank or to receive an application, call the Maryland Commission for Women at 410-767-7137.

Commissioner Blood is a member of MCW's Task Force for Women in Elected and Appointed Office.