



The West Virginia Women's Commission's

## **Legacy of Women Awards Celebration**

Winners will be announced online August 26, 2020 in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women achieving the right to vote -- #WVWomenVote100. Following the announcements, one award winner a day will be featured on the WVWC Facebook page.

The West Virginia Women's Commission hosts the **2020 Legacy of Women Awards Celebration**. These prestigious awards are given to women who have participated in shaping the state or the nation and our role as women achievers for tomorrow's female leaders. The awards are named for outstanding women in West Virginia's history.

### **The Lena Lowe Yost "Educating Women" Award**

For outstanding efforts in her state teaching women about their personal abilities and strength, Ms. Yost was known as one West Virginia's foremost suffragists. In 1920, she led the drive to ratify the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. She advocated for equal salaries and rank among faculty and served as a board member of the federal women's prison in Alderson.

### **The Helaine Rotgin "Mountaineer Spirit" Award**

For outstanding efforts in community and state at the grass roots level as a volunteer, Ms. Rotgin was instrumental in the beginnings of many community organizations -- including the Charleston Interdenominational Council on Social Concerns, Manna Meal, and the Covenant House. She was chairwoman of the Citizens Recycling Council, starting Charleston's first recycling center.

### **The Susan Dew Hoff "Business or Professional Job Pioneer" Award**

For outstanding efforts in her state pioneering a non-traditional professional job, Ms. Hoff was the first female in WV to be licensed by examination as a physician. She could not go to medical school, but studied under her father and on her own.

### **The "Mildred Mitchell-Bateman "Government and Public Service" Award**

For outstanding efforts as the first African-American woman to be named to a high-ranking office in West Virginia state government, becoming the director of the Department of Mental Health for 15 years. She also served as vice-president of the American Psychiatric Association and advocated placing mentally ill patients at facilities nearest their homes and developing community mental health centers.

### **The Sarah 'Mother' Blizzard "Labor Activist" Award**

For outstanding efforts in workers' rights, Sarah Blizzard was actively involved in the United Mine Workers of America union from its beginnings. After eviction from her family's home after a coal strike, they moved to Cabin Creek in Kanawha County. She joined forces with, and was often compared to, famed labor leader "Mother" Jones.

### **The Ann Kathryn Flagg "Artist or Art Supporter" Award**

For outstanding efforts in the arts as a playwright, teacher, and actress, Ann Kathryn Flagg was born in West Virginia and went to West Virginia State College. Through her plays and her other work, she transcended the barriers of racism and campaigned for black voter registration.

### **The Rose Gacioch "Sports Champion" Award**

For outstanding efforts in pioneering a position of women in sports, Rose Gacioch was born in Wheeling and was a right fielder and pitcher from 1944 -54 in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League -- achieving four league championships and making the All-Star Team three times. Her baseball legacy is featured in the movie, "A League of Their Own."

### **The Katherine Coleman Goble Johnson "Women Making History" Award**

For lifetime achievement as a mathematician with contributions over decades to the US aeronautics and space programs. She was the first African-American woman to attend graduate school at West Virginia University and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015. Ms. Johnson was featured in the movie, "Hidden Figures", and in "100 Women", a BBC series of 100 influential women worldwide.

