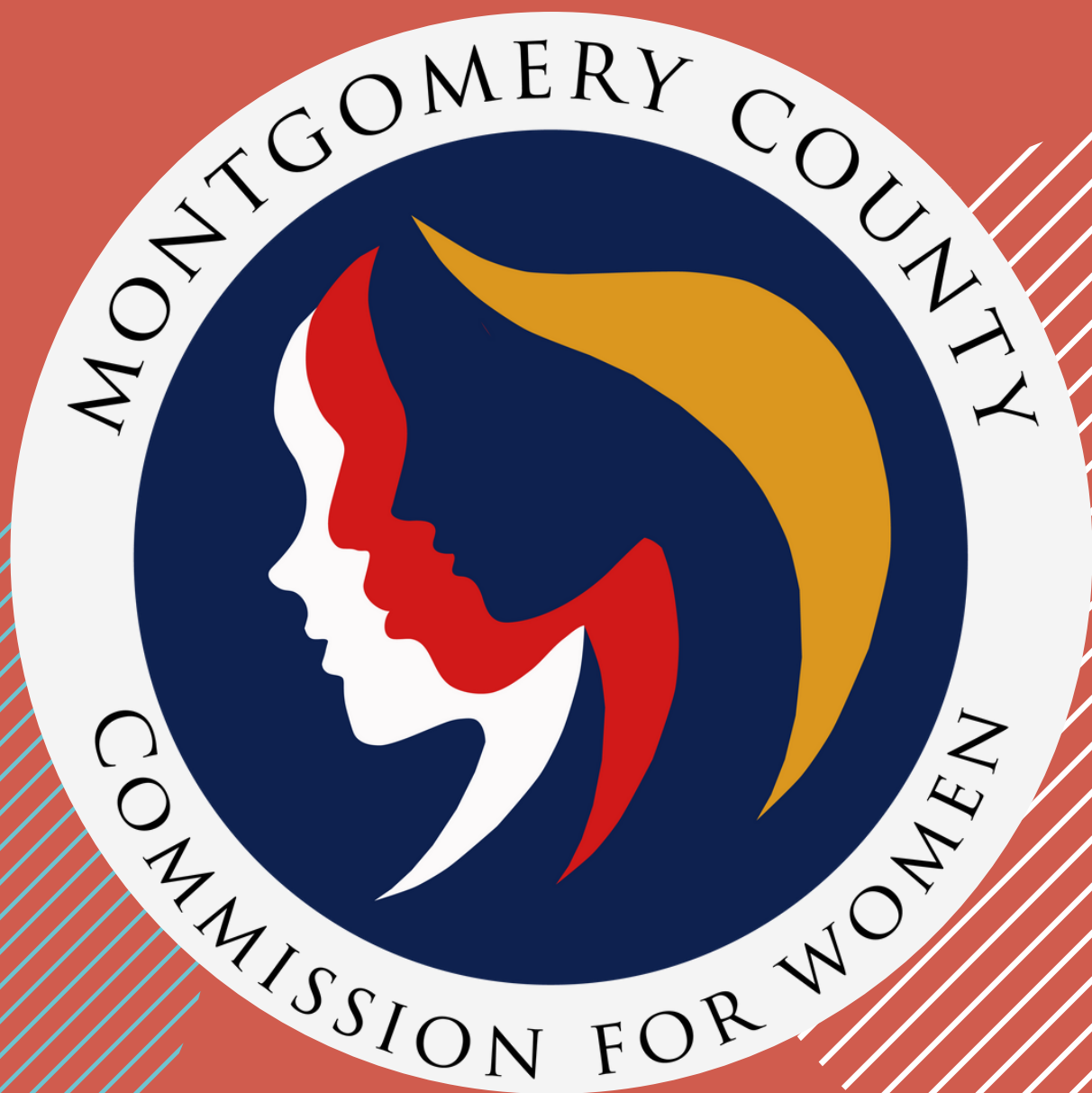


MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021



ADVANCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY SINCE 1972

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240-777-8300 • WWW.MONTGOMERYCOUNTYMD.GOV/CFW

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Nicole Y. Drew, Esq., President (August 2020-February 2021)

Donna Rojas, President (March 2021-June 2021)

Tazeen Ahmad, First Vice President (March 2021-June 2021)

Tiffany Boiman, Secretary (August 2020-February 2021)

Patricia Maclay, Secretary (March 2021-June 2021)

COMMISSIONERS

Angela Whitehead Quigley

Patricia Swanson

Ijeoma E. Enendu

Isabel Argoti

Tonia Bui

Tiffany Boiman

Patricia Maclay

Meredith Weisel

Diana Rubin

Chai Shenoy

Arlinda Clark

Jan Molino

Betty Romero

TEAM MEMBERS:

Jodi Finkelstein, Executive Director

Oyin Thompson, Director of Special Events and Programs

Rose Allen, University of Maryland School of Social Work Intern

Vienna Cheshire, High School Intern

Claire Gelillo, High School Intern

Lucy Goldberg, High School Intern



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE DONNA ROJAS

Greetings Everyone,

Over the past few years, we have had to adjust to the various challenges that COVID-19 presented and still presents. Still, the Montgomery County Commission for Women has not missed a step in supporting the women of Montgomery County. This type of support is a testament to the Commission's resilience. Our commitment to providing effective programming and support services shows that we are meeting the needs of women throughout Montgomery County. None of this would be possible without the Commission's Executive Director, support staff, and interns.

I am proud to be the current Chair of the Montgomery County Commission for Women during times like these. The Commission continues to advance equity, reduce disparities, and support communities across Montgomery County. As we approach 50 years of service, we remain steadfast in our mission to collectively address the most pressing community issues with the County Executive, County Council, and partners from local and state agencies based on the following priorities:

- Women's Health
- Safety and Security
- Economic Empowerment
- Women in Leadership

The Commission continues to support both local and state legislation. It plays a significant role in our Lobby Day efforts to give its voice to legislation that impacts women in Montgomery County and the state of Maryland.

These are unprecedented times. However, the Montgomery County Commission for Women will forge forward to advocate and seek innovative ways to provide and promote services. As we continue our journey to a stronger community, we thank all those individuals and organizations that support the work of the Commission. If there was ever a time to step up and lead, the time is now, and that is what the Montgomery Commission for Women is doing.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT JODI FINKELSTEIN, MSW

When the new fiscal year began on July 1, 2020, Montgomery County and the nation were still learning about COVID-19 and its impact. Many offices, schools, and other non-essential entities remained closed, and our lives had forever changed. The fiscal year also included ongoing discussions of critical social issues and a tumultuous national election.

Despite all challenges, the Commission for Women continued to serve women and families in a virtual world. All programs were offered virtually, including the Introduction to Self-Defense classes. Though walk-in services were no longer available, referrals and other vital information were shared via email or phone.

Monthly commission meetings, as well as committee meetings, were held virtually. The Women's Legislative Briefing was also held online for the first time in the Commission's history. This proved to be exceptionally advantageous since a snowstorm hit the area on briefing morning.

Not all changes experienced by the Commission were COVID-19 related. In December 2020, the Commission was pleased to hire Oyin Thompson as Director of Special Events and Programs. This position is responsible for overseeing all of the Commission's programs, events, and marketing, including social media. Oyin joined the Commission after working as the Education and Outreach Manager at Strathmore Hall Foundation, Inc.

The following pages highlight the Commission's work between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021.

EMERGING LEADERS COMMITTEE

Chair: Meredith Weisel

Committee members: Angela Whitehead Quigley, Isabel Argoti, Tonia Bui, Mona-Lee Belizaire, and Arlinda J. Clark

The Emerging Leaders Committee focused its efforts on the promotion of the Girl Power Contest from the previous year, which was postponed due to COVID as well as the March 2021 contest.

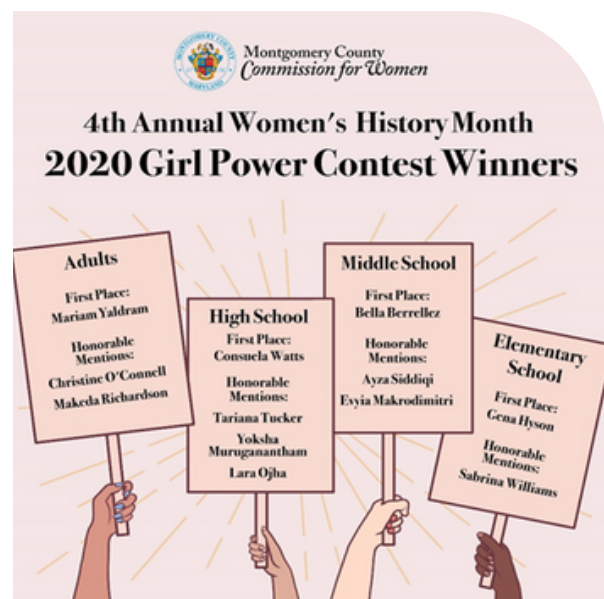
The March 2020 question was:

As we commemorate the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote, what barriers still exist for women and girls, and how can you break them?

Winners were announced via press release and social media in August 2020.

The question for March 2021 was:

History has been made with the United States electing its first ever female vice president. If you had the opportunity, what advice would you give her? Name three important issues she should address while in office.



COMMISSION FOR WOMEN LISTENING TOUR

Commission Planning Committee: Isabel Argoti, Arlinda Clark, Nicole Y. Drew Esq., and Patti Maclay

In November 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Montgomery County Commission for Women hosted a virtual listening tour to hear from Montgomery County residents, specifically women, about how residents were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the social climate (including racial tensions, police brutality, economic impacts, education, etc.) The Commission's goal was to find ways to help the women in the county who have been impacted by the pandemic.

The Listening Tour was co-hosted by County Executive Marc Elrich and all nine members of the Montgomery County Council. The tour stops included Bethesda/Chevy Chase, East County, Upcounty, Midcounty, and the Silver Spring areas. The final Silver Spring session also included Spanish translation. To supplement the virtual tour, the Commission also asked county residents to complete a survey. The survey was distributed via the Commission's social media, e-newsletter, and a press release.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- HOW HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CHANGED LIFE FOR YOU, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR COMMUNITY?
- HAVE YOU ASKED FOR ANY HELP FROM THE COUNTY BECAUSE OF COVID? IF SO, DO YOU FEEL YOU RECEIVED THE HELP YOU NEEDED?
- HOW DO YOU THINK THE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN CAN HELP YOU NOW OR IN THE FUTURE? (THE COMMISSION DOES NOT PROVIDE ANY DIRECT SERVICE. OUR HELP MAY BE IN THE FORM OF PROGRAMS, LEARNING MATERIALS, HELP WITH UNDERSTANDING COUNTY GOVERNMENT SERVICES, OR HELP WITH LAWS OR POLICIES TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNITY.)
- DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ON HOW THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CAN ASSIST YOU DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME?

Based on the responses in the virtual listening tour and the online survey, the Commission identified the following recurring themes:

- Domestic Violence
- COVID relief (CARES Act funding)
- Mental Health
- Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Economic Development/Small Business Assistance

At the time of the Commission's Listening Tour, the status of the health pandemic and social issues were very fluid. The status of Maryland and Montgomery County in addressing the needs of residents changed frequently.

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN LISTENING TOUR

Community Suggestions: Assisting the Family

- Help for parents
- Help for mothers
- Universal Pre-K
- Paid Parental Leave

Community Suggestions: Seniors/Caregivers/Disabled

- Tech resources
- Grocery Delivery
- Caregiver support
- Vaccines
- Advocacy for Disabled Individuals

Community Suggestions: Economic and Job Recovery

- Career Counseling
- Job Search Assistance
- Assist minority/women own businesses

Community Suggestions: Advocacy

- Understanding Rights
- Improving Hostile Working Environments
- Identify Systemic Bias
- Understanding Rights
- Financial Resources that are not COVID-19 related



POLICY & LEGISLATION (PAL) COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Diana Rubin and Tiffany Boiman

Committee Members: Tazeen Ahmad and Nicole Y. Drew, Esq.

The Policy and Legislative Committee continued its robust roster of advocacy activities by hosting its third Annual Lobby Day for current and past Commissioners on December 16, 2020. The Lobby Day was held on Zoom because of COVID-19. The Lobby Day was co-hosted by three other Commissions for Women across the state, including Baltimore County, Howard County, and Prince George's County. The Lobby Day kicked off with an inspirational address by Delegate Sarah Love (D-16).

The Committee continued to focus on four legislative priorities: (1) Time to Care Act, (2) Health Equity Resources Community Act, (3) Maryland Essential Worker Protections Act, and (4) Eliminate Marriage as a Defense to Sex Crimes. Each priority bill was selected to conform with the full Commission's priorities – women's economic empowerment, safety and security, health, and women in leadership.

Due to COVID-19, Commissioners were only able to submit written testimony on bills, as verbal testimony was reserved for delegates/senators sponsoring bills and selected individuals and groups. Despite these limitations, the Committee and Commission:

- **Conducted Social Media Outreach to Increase Awareness and Action:** Twitter and Facebook were used to inform the community about the substance and progress of the priority issues and our positions on them.
- **Sent Action Alerts:** Action Alerts were sent via the e-newsletter, which is distributed to more than 17,000 people. These alerts described the priority bills, the issues they address, and actions that needed to be taken by the community to affect the legislative process. Alerts were sent in collaboration with partner organizations to ensure the greatest impact.
- **VIRTUAL Lobby Day:** Montgomery County legislators were invited to participate in the 4th annual lobby day to discuss priority issues. Current Commissioners, former Commissioners, and Commissioners from other counties were also invited to participate.

Members of the Committee picked a bill to champion, which meant that each Commissioner was responsible for writing and submitting testimony and providing background on the bill during lobby day.

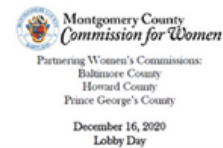
Champions included:

Tazeen Ahmad: Maryland Essential Workers' Protection Act

Tiffany Boiman: Maryland Health Equity Resources Act

Nicole Y. Drew, Esq.: Eliminate Marriage as a Defense to Sex Crimes

Diana Rubin: Time to Care Act



Time	Schedule
9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Welcome Commission President, Nicole Y. Drew, Esq. Commission 2 nd Vice-President and PALS Co-Chair, Diana Rubin Discussion of 2021 Priority Bills Commission President, Nicole Y. Drew, Esq. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate Marriage as a Defense to Sex Crimes Commission 2 nd Vice-President and PALS Co-Chair, Diana Rubin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to Care Act Commission Secretary and PALS Co-Chair, Tiffany Boiman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Equity Resource Communities Act Commissioner Tazeen Ahmad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryland Essential Worker Protections Act
9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	The Honorable Sarah Love (D-16)
9:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Final Review of Talking Points and Meeting Schedule
10:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. 10:15-10:45 10:50-11:30 (no committee yet)	Meetings with Montgomery County Legislators by Topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate Marriage as a Defense to Sex Crimes • Time to Care Act /Maryland Essential Worker Protections Act • Health Equity Resource Communities Act
11:35 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Debrief

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POLICY & LEGISLATION (PAL) COMMITTEE

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

The Commission for Women supported FOUR bills this year by writing a letter of support to the committees hearing our bills. Our 2021 legislative priorities were:

Eliminate Marriage as a Defense to Sex Crimes

Bill Numbers: SB0250, HB0147

Failed in Conference

The legislation sought to appeal an exemption from prosecution for specified sexual crimes if the person was the victim's legal spouse at the time of the alleged rape or sexual offense. This bill once again passed through the house. However, the bills failed after a troubling amendment was added in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

Maryland Health Equity Resource Communities Act

Bill Numbers SB172, HB463

Passed

The bill required the Secretary of Health to establish procedures in designating "Health Equity Resource Communities" (HERCs) to target State resources to specific areas of the State to reduce health disparities, improve health outcomes and access to primary care, promote prevention services, and reduce health care costs and hospital admissions and readmissions.

Time to Care Act

Bill Numbers: SB211, HB0375

Failed to make it out of committees

This bill would have established the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program to provide up to 12 weeks of benefits to a covered individual taking leave from employment due to specified personal and family circumstances. Establishing the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Fund requires, beginning January 1, 2022, certain employees, employers, and self-employed individuals to pay specific contributions, and pay for benefits, a public education program, and implementation and administrative costs.

Maryland Essential Workers Protection Act

Bill Numbers: SB486, HB0581

Passed

The bill authorized essential workers' refusal to fulfill work responsibility under certain circumstances. It prohibited the essential employer from retaliating or taking other adverse action against an essential worker or another worker for specific actions.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN 2021 VIRTUAL WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

Co-Chairs: Donna Rojas and Tazeen Ahmad
Emerging Leaders Chair: Angela Whitehead Quigley

The 41st WLB was held via Zoom on Sunday, January 31, 2020. The theme was *Beyond 2020: Advocating with Strength for Justice and Equality*. The event was exceptional not only because it moved online but because nearly 600 people participated. The Commission remains thankful to all of the WLB's planning members, participants, and panelists for making the unprecedented event a success. The WLB was made possible by over 60 community and corporate sponsors and the support of consultants Brotman | Winter | Fried.

Welcome and introductions included recorded greetings from Senator Ben Cardin and Congressman John Sarbanes, Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich, Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks, Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner, County Council President Tom Hucker, and Councilmember Nancy Navarro. Former Maryland Lt. Governor Michael Steele also shared greetings.

The plenary was fifty-five minutes and featured women working on the front lines during COVID-19. Panelists represented women in healthcare, education, small business, and retail. Four breakout sessions followed the plenary and included: (1) Economic and Social Justice, (2) Safety and Security, (3) Healthcare, and (4) Education.

Video greetings from actor/producer/dancer Debbie Allen and Olympian Jackie Joyner Kersee surprised participants and were included in the breaks. Kaiser Permanente, a long-time WLB sponsor, provided participants with "chair yoga" in the afternoon.

The online event concluded with networking and allowed participants to further discuss topics presented during the breakout sessions.

Content for Emerging Leaders ran concurrently with the WLB. Former intern Vienna Chesire served as the Emerging Leaders keynote speaker. Students in grades 6-12 participated in two breakout sessions: (1) Building Your Advocacy Toolkit and (2) Building Bridges: Finding Mentors and Opportunities to Strengthen Your Community. Students were then divided by grade into virtual rooms to further discuss the topics.

THANK YOU SPONSORS!



Tonia Bui



Councilwoman Laurie-Anne Sayles



Diana & Bill Conway



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Theta Omega Omega Chapter • Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Xi Sigma Omega Chapter • Baltimore NOW (National Organization for Women) • Business and Professional Women of Maryland (BPW/MD) • Delegate Pam Queen, Legislative District 14 • Eta Pi Zeta Chapter, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. • Frederick County (MD) Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. • Ivy Vine Charities, Inc. • J. Franklin Bourne Bar Association • League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, MD • Linda L. Mahoney • Maryland Commission for Women • Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) • Maryland Women's Heritage Center • Montgomery County (MD) Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. • Montgomery County Business & Professional Women (MC BPW) • Montgomery County Maryland Section National Council of Negro Women, Inc. • Montgomery County NOW • Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club • Montgomery County Young Democrats • Montgomery Women • NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland • National Coalition of 100 Black Women Prince George's County Chapter • Patricia L. Maclay, MD • Planned Parenthood Advocates for DC & NoVa • Potomac Valley Section, National Council of Negro Women • Potomac Women's Republican Club • Prince George's County Commission for Women • Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., Montgomery County Chapter • Women's Bar Association of Maryland, Montgomery County Chapter • Women's Business Owners of Montgomery County • Women's Equality Day Celebration across Maryland 2020-2021 • Women's Law Center of Maryland • Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., Tau Delta Zeta Chapter • Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Gamma Alpha Eta Zeta Chapter

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN 2021 VIRTUAL WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING



PARTICIPANTS VIEW OF THE VIRTUAL WLB



WLB FINAL SCREEN SHOT: FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: CO-CHAIR DONNA ROJAS, CO-CHAIR TRICIA SWANSON, PRESIDENT NICOLE Y. DREW, ESQ., MSW INTERN ROSE ALLEN, COMMISSIONER TAZEEN AHMAD, COMMISSIONER MONA-LEE BELZAIRE, COMMISSIONER ANGELA WHITEHEAD QUIGLEY, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS OYIN THOMPSON, COMMISSIONER PATTI MACLAY, COMMISSIONER ISABEL ARGOTI, COMMISSIONER ARLINDA CLARK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JODI FINKELSTEIN, AND COMMISSIONER TONIA BUI.

PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

Chair: Ijeoma Enendu

Committee Members: Donna Rojas, Patti Maclay, and Nicole Y. Drew, Esq.

In addition to the regular programming listed below, the Committee partnered with Montgomery Women to celebrate Women’s History Month by celebrating women “making history” in the community. The inaugural event highlighted women “making history” and was showcased daily throughout March. The celebration cumulated in an online virtual event on March 31 entitled, “Women Making History—Past, Present and ‘Your’ Future.”



PROGRAMMING



Financial Health & Wellness Series:

The Montgomery County Public Libraries partnered with the Commission to offer a series of financial seminars that walked participants through the ins and outs of "all things" money. The seminars were led by Jamie Lapin owner of Risk Management Group, LLC. Topics included Financial Planning 101, Planning for Retirement, Social Security and Medicare, and Divorce and Money. The series ran on September 22, 2020, September 29, 2020, October 6, 2020 and October 13, 2020 and again on March 3, 2021, March 9, 2021, March 16, 2021 and March 23, 2021.



Two-Part Career Series Pop-Up Seminars:

Career Consultant Jacqueline Williams provided two "pop" up on line seminars that covered resume writing and interviewing online. The two part series were offered on December 8, 2020 and December 15, 2020.



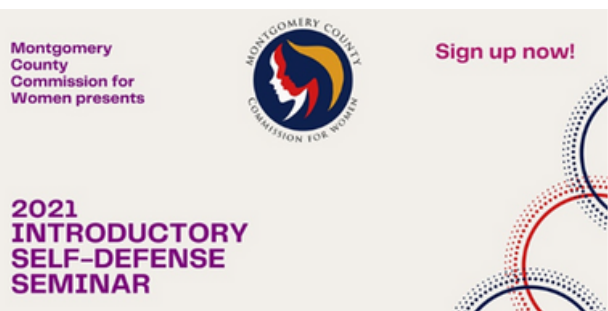
Separation and Divorce: What Do I Need to Know?

The Commission once again partnered with the Montgomery County Bar Association, Family Law section to provide free seminars on the "ins" and "outs" of going through a separation and divorce in Maryland. Participants learned about: the Methods of Dispute Resolution, When and Where to File, Types of Divorce and Grounds, Financial Statements, Alimony, Property and Equitable Distribution, Role of the Attorney, and Domestic Violence/Orders of Protection. Seminars were held the first Wednesday of every month from 7-8:30pm.



Create Your Path: A 5-Part Career Series to Creating Your Personal Brand:

Throughout this five-part career series, participants heard from human resource professionals on topics including: Resume Writing, (May 4, 2021), Interviewing Skills, (May 11, 2021), Networking/Elevator Pitch, (May 18), Wage Negotiation (May 25), and Building Your Own Online Brand (June 1) All classes were free and held online.



Introductory Self-Defense Seminar:

This one-hour introductory self-defense seminar provided teen & adult women of all fitness levels with information that may reduce their risk of exposure to violence and introduced them to the physical aspects of self-defense. Virtual classes were held on line May 20, 2021, June 15, 2021 and June 24, 2021.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Isabel Argoti

Committee Members: Patti Maclay, Nicole Y. Drew, Esq.

Public Relations Committee members are responsible for providing guidance on the promotion of CFW programs and events. Among the tasks the Committee spearheaded was the Commission's first public logo contest. The contest ran from July 2020–September 2020. The logo contest aimed to improve the Commission's overall branding and provided a refreshed but original look. Judging was led by Commissioners on the Committee, with input from all Commissioners. The contest was open to all County residents, including children. Entries submitted by anyone younger than 18 years received permission from a legal guardian and were the minor's own work.

Ortega Sheelagh was announced the winner of the "Create Our New Logo" contest in February 2021. Sheelagh is a longtime resident of Montgomery County and is originally from Lima, Peru. Her involvements in the County include serving as a member of the Board of Directors at Montgomery Community Media, assisting efforts in the Department of Health and Human Services, and attending Montgomery College.

The winning logo was selected because of its clean design, modern layout, and unique representation of the diverse women served in the County.

In addition to the logo contest, the Committee worked hard to launch the Commission's YouTube page. The official launch was August 19, 2020—the same day as the virtual Suffrage Celebration. The page showcases the Commission's programs, Commissioners, and other events.



PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Committee members also worked with the Commission's Executive Committee to publish statements on behalf of the Commission related to numerous public issues.

Montgomery County Commission for Women Stands in Solidarity With Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities



The Montgomery County Commission for Women is deeply alarmed by the escalating hateful rhetoric and violence directed at Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders throughout our County and nation. The tragic events in Georgia remain in our hearts and minds. We note that six out of the eight victims identified as female. We continue to stand in solidarity with all those working to prevent all forms of hatred and discrimination.

We know that statements are essential, but not enough. Since its founding, the Commission for Women has fought for women's equality in Montgomery County and throughout the State of Maryland. We recognize that Montgomery County is a majority minority County, with 56 percent of women identifying as an ethnic minority. Our work has led to policies and programs to eliminate gender and racial disparities in employment, health care and the criminal justice system. We are actively looking to partner with coalitions working on anti-racism and anti-discrimination efforts in our County. We are dedicated to working for a County, and country, where people of all genders, races, immigration status, nationality, disabilities, occupations, and incomes can thrive and not live in fear.

@moco_cfw
#stop hate

Montgomery County Commission for Women

Statement from the Montgomery County Commission for Women issued today:

Statement on Deaths of Congressman John Lewis and Civil Rights Leader Reverend C.T. Vivian

Montgomery County Commission for Women (CFW) mourns the loss of two great civil rights leaders, Congressman John Lewis and Civil Rights Activist C.T. Vivian. Both men were part of the struggle for racial justice in America. Among his many triumphs, Congressman John Lewis co-lead hundreds of peaceful, orderly protestors across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on March 7, 1965. His goal was to march from Selma to Montgomery to advocate the need for voting rights in the state. Congressman Lewis remained an ardent supporter of nonviolent protests despite the violence he endured throughout his lifetime. He became a congressman for Georgia's Fifth Congressional District in 1986 and served with distinction.

Reverend C.T. Vivian was an early and key advisor to Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Like Congressman Lewis, Rev. Vivian encountered violence throughout his life yet remained a stalwart believer in non-violence. In 2013, President Obama honored Reverend Vivian with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Since its founding, the CFW has fought for women's equality in Montgomery County and throughout Maryland. Our work has led to programs and policies that eliminate gender and racial disparities in employment, health care, and the criminal justice system.

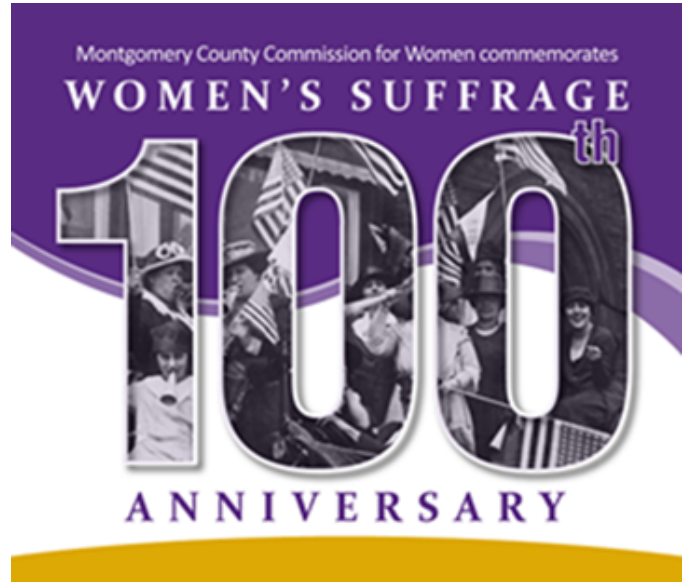
We extend our sincerest condolences to the families of Congressman Lewis and Reverend Vivian.

WOMENS SUFFRAGE COMMITTEE

Commissioner Planning Committee Co-Chairs: Tonia Bui and Patti Maclay

The commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment was held virtually on August 19, 2020. Featured speakers included Robyn Muncy, Ph.D., author, guest curator of the National Archives exhibit, "Rightfully Hers: American Women and the Vote," and Professor of History at the University of Maryland. Dr. Muncy was joined by Dr. DeRionne Pollard, former president of Montgomery College. This virtual event was targeted to all ages and was the first time the Commission produced a celebratory video that was broadcast "live."

Over 15 community sponsors assisted with the program by providing online resources and publicity assistance. Bernstein Management Corporation/EYA/Bethesda Farm Women's Market and Carl M. Freeman Foundation served as presenting sponsors. Montgomery College and Natalie Harris assisted with video production.



LIAISON ACCOMPLISHMENTS

RespectFEST

Respectfest Liaison: Commissioner Angela Whitehead Quigley

The Commission for Women regularly helps plan and promote Respectfest, a program that raises awareness about youth and teen dating violence and healthy relationships. Respectfest was virtual and took place from April 18 – April 23, 2021. The week kicked off with an online webinar featuring a keynote speaker who shared a personal story about an abusive relationship experienced while in high school. Online workshops throughout the week included: Dating Violence Jeopardy for High School students, “#RelationshipGoals: Navigating healthy and unhealthy friendships and relationships” for middle school students, Yoga, and Self Defense Classes, and workshops for parents and youth-serving providers. Students could also engage in the content on their own time with various online activities that addressed consent, healthy and unhealthy relationships, helping a friend, how to be an ally to LGBTQ+ folks, technology abuse, teen dating violence 101, and warning signs.

Approximately 1,000 individuals participated in RespectFest, which was promoted through daily social media posts. Winners of the Choose Respect Video Contest were also announced on social media throughout the week.

The Choose Respect Video Contest challenged participants to create a 60-second video addressing either physical abuse, emotional/verbal abuse, types of technological abuse, financial abuse, issues around consent, examples of healthy behaviors in a relationship, or bystander intervention. 349 entries (by 443 students) from 69 different schools and one organization were reviewed. A sister-brother team won with their video, “Love Should Never Hurt.” Along with the winners chosen by a panel of judges (\$1,000 for first prize, \$750 for second, \$500 for third, and gift cards for two honorable mentions), 16,000 students from around the county viewed and voted on a “fan favorite” video, which won \$500. The Fan Favorite was also awarded to “Love Should Never Hurt”. The award money was provided by the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Scholarship

Liaison Members: Patti Maclay and Isabel Argoti

The Commission, in conjunction with the Montgomery College Foundation, created a scholarship to support students pursuing careers in STEM fields in Fall of 2015. The \$10,500 endowment, funded by individual gifts, supports current Montgomery College students now and in the future.

Eligible students may apply for a \$500 scholarship. As the endowment matures, future students will receive scholarship awards through the interest earned on the endowment.

Current scholarship recipients include:

Name	Academic Year Scholarship Awarded
Jana Christina Catuche	2015-2016
Mansura Dansani	2017-2018
Awai Atchade	2018-2019
Vivian Cid	2019-2020
Kimberly Martinez-Monge	2020-2021