

Commission for Women

May 2008

Newsletter of the Montgomery County Commission for Women

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Message from the President

The Commission for Women was deeply saddened by the recent passing of four extraordinary Maryland women – State Senator Gwendolyn T. Britt, former Commissioner Shirley L. Johnson, State Delegate Jane E. Lawton, and Montgomery County Councilwoman Marilyn J. Praisner. Jane, Marilyn, and Shirley were friends of mine, and I will truly miss them. Senator Britt will be remembered especially in Montgomery County for her success in desegregating Glen Echo Park here. All four women leave a legacy of exceptional public service, ardent advocacy for women's rights, and examples of what women can achieve when they work with and for each other. We have included short biographies of these wonderful women leaders later in this newsletter.

It is unfortunate but notable that three of these women died of heart-related illnesses. Heart disease is still the number one killer among women. To lose three exceptional women to the same illness in such a short period of time should remind all of us to think about and learn more about heart disease.

These deaths also remind us that we must re-commit to gender balance in politics. Maryland had the highest percentage of women legislators in the country in 2005 and 2006! With the loss of Senator Britt and Delegate Lawton, and the resignation of others and the dynamics of our last election, the number of women in Maryland's General Assembly fell from 67 in 2004 (36%) to 59 in 2008 (31%). Now, we rank just 8th in the country. That's not good enough. The Commission for Women is not a political organization, but I urge you to encourage women to run for office and to support those women who put themselves on the line for public service in any capacity. If you're not already in elected or appointed office, now is the time to investigate Montgomery County's boards, commissions, and committees. You can find more information about opportunities to get involved on the County's website, www.montgomerycountymd.gov.

We must continue to work with all legislators to advance our priorities and build support for bills that will benefit women. The Commission for Women actively worked on a legislative agenda for this session of the Maryland General Assembly, delivering testimony and letters of support on a number of issues that impact women at the local, state, and federal levels. (See more on page 2.) Please join the Commission in working to change current laws or to enact new legislation in the interest of women and their families. Write to your legislators, call their offices, deliver written or oral testimony. Send the message that we are still here and still strong, and that we're ready for access, attention, and support – in short, a seat at the table.

There may be no better way to honor the legacy of Marilyn Praisner, Jane Lawton, Gwendolyn Britt, and Shirley Johnson than to take action and advocate on behalf of Maryland's women!

Regina L. Oldak

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In Memoriam

Delegate Jane E. Lawton: Delegate Lawton first joined the Maryland General Assembly representing District 18, Montgomery County, in 2005 when she was appointed to fill the seat vacated by former Delegate John Hurson. She was elected to her own term in the fall of 2006. Prior to this, she was the Mayor of Chevy Chase, a special assistant to the County Executive, and was serving as Montgomery County's cable administrator at the time of her death. At the state level, Lawton championed for a cleaner environment and stiffer penalties for human trafficking. Delegate Lawton passed away on November 29, 2007.

Senator Gwendolyn T. Britt: Senator Britt started her political activities in the 1960s, protesting segregation policies in Glen Echo Park and as a Freedom Rider in Mississippi. Senator Britt was first elected in 2002 to represent District 47, Prince George's County. She was elected chairwoman of the Prince George's County delegation and was the lead sponsor of a bill to grant voting rights to ex-felons. Senator Britt passed away on January 12, 2008.

Councilwoman Marilyn J. Praisner: Councilwoman Praisner was the longest serving current member of the Montgomery County Council. She was elected to the council in 1990, and was in her fifth four-year term. Ms. Praisner recently completed her third term as council president. Councilwoman Praisner entered her long and distinguished tenure as an elected official in 1982 when she was elected to serve on the county's Board of Education.

During her last term on the council, Ms. Praisner chaired the Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee and served on the Management and Fiscal Policy Committee, which she had previously chaired. Councilmember Praisner took the lead on a variety of issues, including child care, technology, the environment, private-public partnerships and fiscal policy. Councilwoman Praisner represented District 4, Eastern Montgomery County. She passed away on February 1, 2008.

Shirley L. Johnson: Ms. Johnson had a long and distinguished career of community activism in Montgomery County, having served on many advisory committees, boards and councils. She was an active member of her Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and the National Council of Negro Women. She served two terms on the county's Commission on Health, and served on the Smoke-Free Montgomery County Coalition and the Smoke-Free Maryland Board of Directors. She worked on the planning committee for the county's Women's Fair, and served for six years on the Montgomery County Commission for Women, serving as the liaison to the Interagency Committee on Fair Housing. A graduate of Howard University in 1958, and Leadership Montgomery Community Leaders Program in 1996, Shirley Johnson was inducted into the Montgomery County Human Rights Hall of Fame in 2002. She was honored by the Montgomery County Business and Professional Women with a Woman of Achievement Award in October 2005.

Montgomery County Commission for Women State Legislative Agenda

The Commission for Women is charged with advocating on behalf of women. Part of this advocacy work is to engage in legislation at the local, state, and federal levels that positively impacts the lives of women. The top three priorities during the Maryland General Assembly for 2008 were:

Pay Equity (H.B. 1156) – Legislation to address the recommendations of the Equal Pay Commission to develop and implement a consistent and comprehensive data collection system.

STATUS: Signed by the Governor

Kids Act First (H.B. 1391) – Requiring the Comptroller to send a notice regarding eligibility for the Maryland Medical Assistance Program or the Maryland Children's Health Program to a taxpayer with a dependent child if income reported on a tax return for tax year 2007 meets income eligibility standards; requiring that the notice be developed by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Requiring a taxpayer to report on the income tax return the presence or absence of health care coverage for each dependent child; etc.

STATUS: Passed the General Assembly; Awaiting Governor's signature

Flexible Leave Act (H.B. 40, S.B. 344) – To legalize the common practice of allowing employees to use paid sick leave to care for a sick family member.

STATUS: Passed the General Assembly; Awaiting Governor's signature

February, American Heart Month

Sources: American Heart Association, National Women's Health Resource Center, and The Heart Truth

“In Montgomery County heart disease is the leading cause of death among women, above all cancers.”
(2007 Report on the Status of Women in Montgomery County)

February was American Heart Month and focused attention on all heart related health issues such as heart disease and stroke. Heart disease in particular remains in the minds of many as a “man’s disease” despite its status as the number one killer among women nationwide. Understanding heart disease could significantly prolong your life and the number of years you have to live “in good health.”

It is vitally important for women to take control of their health, seek out information, and ask their doctor if they are at risk for heart disease. Studies have shown that women are less likely than men to receive aggressive diagnosis and treatment for heart disease. Women who are at risk for heart disease are often not referred for diagnostic testing that would be standard for men. (*Journal of Health Quarterly*) Only about 33% of percutaneous coronary interventions, such as angioplasties and stent placements, are performed on women. (*Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*)

Research shows that women can lower their heart disease risk enormously by simply leading a healthier lifestyle. In most cases,

that means following a heart healthy eating plan, getting regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and not smoking. Some women also may need to take medication to control heart disease risk factors.

What is heart disease and is it different from cardiovascular diseases?

Heart disease includes diseases that affect both the heart and the cardiovascular system. Some of the major conditions associated with heart disease are heart attacks, heart failure, congenital heart disease, heart muscle disease, and coronary artery disease (CAD).

What are the risk factors for heart disease?

The risk factors are predominately lifestyle choices that in some cases can be controlled by the individual or with medication. Smoking, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, overweight/obesity, physical inactivity, and diabetes are all associated with higher risk of heart disease.

Questions to ask your doctor?

1. Am I at risk for developing heart disease?
2. What is my blood pressure? What does it mean for me, and what do I need to do about it?
3. What are my cholesterol numbers? (These include total cholesterol, LDL, HDL, and triglycerides, a type of fat found in the blood and food.) What do they mean for me, and what do I need to do about them?
4. What are my “body mass index” and waist measurement? Do they mean that I need to lose weight for my health?
5. What is my blood sugar level, and does it mean I’m at risk for diabetes? If so, what do I need to do about it?
6. What other screening tests for heart disease do I need?
7. What can you do to help me quit smoking?
8. How much physical activity do I need to help protect my heart?
9. What is a heart healthy eating plan for me?
10. How can I tell if I may be having a heart attack? If I think I’m having one, what should I do?
11. What are some activities I can do now for my health to prevent heart disease?

For Additional Resources Contact:

American Heart Association
1-800-242-8721

www.americanheart.org

Provides heart-healthy lifestyle-related information and detailed information on heart disease risks and management.

American Diabetes Association
1-800-342-2383 (English and Spanish)

www.diabetes.org

Offers diabetes-related diagnosis, treatment, management and lifestyle information in a variety of formats.

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
Information Center
301-592-8573

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

Web site offers wide range of information on diseases of the heart, blood vessels, lungs and blood, and sleep disorders. Information also available by mail and phone.

WomenHeart
The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease
202-728-7199

www.womenheart.org

National organization founded by women with heart disease; dedicated to reducing death and disability among women living with heart disease.

Counseling and Career Center

Upcoming Workshops

HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL PERSONAL BRAND

Tuesday, May 27, 2008 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
(1 session) FEE: \$16

Everyday and everywhere you are expressing your personal brand. In today's fast-paced and competitive world, it is important to understand that personal branding is key to getting ahead in your career or business, regardless of age, position or industry.

This workshop will cover:

- Strategies to create a successful personal brand
- Ways to define you and/or your company through your brand
- Steps to enhance your profile to gain visibility and a competitive edge in the workplace

Presented by Yasmin Anderson-Smith, Kyms Image International, LLC

FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR RETIREMENT

Wednesday, May 28, 2008 6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.
(1 session) FEE: \$16

Are you concerned about your life after retirement? Do you ever ask yourself: "When can I afford to retire?" or "Should I move my employer plan to an IRA"? Learn how to maximize your financial comfort in retirement.

Presented by Jamie S. Lapin, CFP, CDFA

MAKING YOUR MONEY WORK FOR YOU

Tuesday, June 3, 2008 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
(1 session) FEE: \$16

Have you ever thought about the power of saving and investing? Over time, regular contributions, whether large or small, will grow and help you reach your financial goals. In this workshop, you will learn the fundamentals of financial planning, saving and investing. You will also receive practical suggestions for better money management.

Presented by Jamie S. Lapin, CFP, CDFA

INTERVIEWING : FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DESK

Wednesday, June 4, 2008 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
(1 session) FEE: \$16

Learn what a job interview is like from the employer's point of view. Discover strategies and techniques for successful interviewing and subsequent job offers.

Presented by Cindy Jones, M.S.

NEGOTIATING SALARIES AND BENEFITS

Friday, June 6, 2008 10:00 a.m. - noon
(1 session) FEE: \$16

Whether you are accepting a new position or seeking an improved compensation package for your present job, it is important to learn negotiating strategies. The concepts and techniques you will acquire in this workshop could improve your chances for higher income and better benefits.

Presented by Rachel L. Manchester, M.S.

COPING WITH JOB LOSS

Monday, June 9, 2008 9:00 a.m.- noon
(1 session) FEE: \$24

Losing a job is a painful experience that causes a high level of stress.

In this workshop, two professional counselors will discuss the steps needed to deal with both the personal and career issues surrounding job loss. Helpful suggestions will be presented to motivate you and help you maintain a positive attitude as you explore new opportunities.

Presented by Eliane Herdani, M.S., LCPC and Rachel L. Manchester, M.S.

LET'S TALK:

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR COUPLES

Tuesday, June 10, 2008 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
(1 session) FEE: \$16 per person

Couples often get into conflicts because they do not hear each other. This workshop is designed to teach married couples and those in a committed relationship how to communicate effectively. Two experienced couples facilitators, Marian Horton, Counselor, and Clyde Horton, Personal Coach, will teach couples to:

- Speak for themselves, not the other person
- Take the "defensive posture" out of communicating
- Build goodwill in the relationship
- Practice using communication tools

This workshop is for COUPLES ONLY.

Presented by Marian Horton, MSW and Personal Coach and Clyde Horton, Personal Coach

ONLINE REGISTRATION & PAYMENT AVAILABLE FOR ALL WORKSHOPS!!

For the full calendar of workshops and seminars offered please visit us:
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

Maryland Women's Hall of Fame

Sources: Maryland State Commission for Women and Maryland State Archives

On March 12th, the Maryland Commission for Women inducted six women into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. This Hall of Fame was established through the efforts of the Maryland Commission for Women and the Women Legislators of Maryland in 1985. Its purpose is to honor Maryland women who have made unique and lasting contributions to the economic, political, cultural and social life of the state, and to provide visible models of achievement for tomorrow's female leaders. The honored women range in eras of action from Harriet Ross Tubman and Mary Young Pickersgill to contemporaries, Rachel Carson and Barbara Mikulski. Among those honored are legislators, political and social activists, scientists, educators, writers, and business, spiritual and community leaders. They represent women who have helped to shape the State of Maryland, the United States, and the world.

This year's inductees are:

Eleanora Fagan, "Billie Holiday"

In just a short lifetime, Ms. Billie Holiday overcame the challenges of a poverty-stricken childhood and a discriminatory society to become one of the nation's most famous female jazz vocalists. During the 1930's and 40's, she famously asserted her talents to raise the social and political consciousness of black society, particularly with her melodic protests against domestic violence and lynching practices across the south.

Ramona McCarthy Hawkins, R.Ph.

As one of the few registered African American female pharmacists when she started, Mrs. Ramona McCarthy Hawkins now has over fifty-seven years of diverse pharmaceutical experience. She continues to support many current pharmacists as well as students of pharmacy with various board memberships, scholarship endowments, and professional programs. She also advocates equal opportunity and racial equality in professional employment. Mrs. McCarthy Hawkins is highly regarded by her peers as a pioneer in her field who sets the stage for others.

Ellen Moses Heller

Judge Ellen Moses Heller has served in her community for over thirty years as a law professional and humanitarian. She graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law with honors to become a leader in her community. As a significant professional and civic leader, Judge Heller focuses on designing original social programs to help citizens and their families achieve success. Judge Heller's altruism reaches beyond her Maryland community; in fact, it spans the world with her active role in the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, a nonpolitical international rescue and relief organization.



Pauline Menes

With more than forty years of public service in Maryland, Pauline Herkowitz Menes stands as a legendary role model to women in government and politics across the nation. She has not only advocated for parity of female leadership in government but also for the rights of women in their everyday lives. Ms. Menes played a fundamental role in the establishment of the Women's Legislative Caucus of Maryland in 1972 (now the Women Legislators of Maryland).

Toby Barbara Orenstein

A resident of Maryland since 1959, Ms. Orenstein has openly devoted herself to touching the minds and hearts of students and patrons through theater. She began with the founding of Toby's Dinner Theater in Columbia, Maryland and nearly a decade later established the famous Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts (CCTA). Since then, she has served her community by coordinating multiple projects and programs that primarily motivate and teach children theater arts. Ms. Orenstein's mission particularly encourages social diversity and equality among community members. In the area of performing arts, her commitment is considered legendary.

Emily Wilson Walker, M.D.

A talented woman of medicine, Dr. Emily Walker provided essential medical services to the citizens in her small rural community and the villages of southern Anne Arundel County for over fifty years. She notably extended her compassion and medical skill to those who lacked access to standard medical attention, regardless of race, class, or sex.

To learn more about past Maryland Women's Hall of Fame honorees, visit: <http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/educ/exhibits/womenshall/html/whflist.html>

Dreams Deferred: Single Mothers and Poverty

Commission for Women Host Forum Series Focused on Mothers and Poverty

While only 3% of Montgomery County's families have incomes below the federal poverty line, close to 30% of families headed by a single mother with young children live in poverty. (*2007 Report on the Status of Women in Montgomery County*) In response to this alarming statistic, the Commission for Women chose low-income single mothers as a priority for 2008 and created the Mothers and Poverty (MAP) Committee.

The MAP Committee is offering a series of public forums entitled *Dreams Deferred: Single Mothers and Poverty*. These seminars feature issue experts, advocates, service providers, and policymakers. The purpose of these programs is to draw attention to this important issue, to educate the community, to bring together the many people serving this population, and to identify strategies for alleviating poverty.

The forums take place at the Montgomery County Commission for Women Counseling and Career Center. All forums are moderated by MAP Committee Chair Tedi Osias.

Last upcoming forum scheduled:

Dreams Realized: Programs That Work

May 21, 2008, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

This forum is free and open to the public. Licensed Social Workers and Counselors may earn two CEUs for each forum. A processing fee of \$10, per forum for CEU's is required.

To register, online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw or please call 240-777-8330.

April: Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Source: Montgomery County Commission for Women's Violence Brochure

Crime reports for Montgomery County, show that:

- Every female murder victim in the County in 2006 was killed by someone she knew
- 79% of all reported rape victims in 2006 were related to or otherwise knew their attackers
- 35% of all reported rape victims in 2006 were under the age of 18

Designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), April brings an annual opportunity to focus awareness on sexual violence and its prevention. Getting out of an abusive relationship is often difficult and can be very dangerous. In fact, the most perilous time for a woman is when she tries to *leave* an abusive situation. It's much better not to get into one. Every woman and girl must recognize the signs of violence in others.

Avoid dating people who:

- Try to control or restrict your behavior and activities
- Have angry outbursts
- Criticize or demean you or those you care about
- Intimidate or threaten you
- Physically restrain or hurt you
- Enjoy hurting animals
- Abuse drugs or alcohol
- Pressure you to drink or take drugs
- Isolate you from other relationships
- Pressure you for sex or dates
- Make all the decisions for you
- Blame you for their abusive behavior
- Are overly jealous of your relationships with others

For Additional Resources Contact:

Montgomery County Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program (VASAP)

240-777-1355 or 240-777-HELP (4357)
Email: vasap@montgomerycountymd.gov
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/vasap

Montgomery County Abused Persons Program
240-777-4195 or 240-777-4673 (24 hours)

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
301-352-4574 or 1-800-MD-HELPS (63-43577)
Email: info@mnadv.org
<http://www.mnadv.org/>

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
1-800-983-RAPE (toll free)
Email: info@mcasa.org
<http://www.mcasa.org>

May is National Osteoporosis Month

Source: National Associations of Commissions for Women (NACW)

Osteoporosis is a silent disease that often occurs without symptoms. The Montgomery County Commission for Women joins in promoting May as osteoporosis awareness month.

An estimated 8 million women in the U.S. have osteoporosis, and 40% of women age 50 or older will experience an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. Osteoporosis also affects men, but to a lesser extent. For those who have or are at risk of having osteoporosis, prevention and treatment are the best defenses.

Answering the following questions may help you to determine if you are at risk for osteoporosis-related fractures:

- Are you postmenopausal?
- Have you had a bone fracture after age 50?
- Did your mother suffer a fracture after age 50?
- Do you weigh less than 125 pounds?
- Are you taking oral medicines such as cortisone or prednisone?
- Do you currently smoke?
- Do you need your arms to stand up from a chair?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be at risk for osteoporosis-related fractures. Talk to your doctor about your risk for osteoporosis.

Recognizing Outstanding Achievement by Women

Source: Maryland Daily Record

Maryland's Top 100 Women

On Monday, May 12th Maryland's Top 100 Women gathered in celebration with family, friends, and colleagues at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore. This is an annual award by the *Maryland Daily Record* newspaper.

A panel of judges consisting of business professionals and past winners from across the state selects the Top 100 Women. Candidates may only be selected once every two years, and may only be selected three times in a lifetime.

Since 1996, the Daily Record has recognized more than 750 high-achieving Maryland women who are making an impact through their leadership, community service, and mentoring.

Every year Montgomery County is home to many of Maryland's Top 100 Women, this year is no different, with at least 17 women receiving this honor. The Montgomery County Commission for Women would like to congratulate all of this year's recipients.

For Additional Resources Contact:

Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases National Resource Center

1-800-624-2663

www.osteoporosis.org

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

301-496-8188

www.nih.gov/niams

National Institute on Aging

1-800-222-2225

www.nih.gov/nia

National Osteoporosis Foundation

1-877-868-4520

www.nof.org

Foundation for Osteoporosis Research and Education

1-888-266-3015

www.fore.org/patients/prevention.html

The National Women's Health Information Center

1-800-994-9662

www.4women.gov/FAQ/osteopor.htm

This year's recipients affiliated with Montgomery County include:

Dr. Sharon D. Allison-Ottery

Judge Mary Ellen Barbera

Cathy S. Bernard

Wanda G. Caporaletti

Patricia E. Cornish

Councilmember Valerie Ervin

Jodi Finkelstein

Mary Ellen Flynn

Julie Lenzer Kirk

Treasurer Nancy K. Kopp

Senator Rona E. Kramer

Nhora Barrera Murphy

Juliette Rizzo

Hannah Sassoon

Judge Katherine D. Savage

Sally L. Sternbach

Judith Vaughan-Prather

Find the complete list of 100 Women:

<http://www.mddailyrecord.com/events.cfm>

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Rockville, Maryland 20850-1703
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

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Call us at 240-777-8300 or visit our website to learn more about our Counseling & Career Center, workshops, programs and other services.

ALL FORUMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The Montgomery County Commission for Women Presents
Dreams Deferred: Single Mothers and Poverty
Forum Series



Forums to take place at the
Montgomery County Commission for Women
401 N. Washington Street, Suite 100
Rockville, MD 20850

➤ **Dreams Realized: Programs That Work**

May 21, 2008, 7 - 9 p.m.

To register, please call (240)777-8330 or register online at
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

ALL FORUMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

CEUs: Licensed social workers and licensed clinical professional counselors in Maryland can earn **TWO** continuing education units (CEUs) for **EACH** forum they attend. In order to receive these CEUs, a charge of \$10 per forum will apply. One must stay for the entire forum to receive CEUs.

