



21ST ANNUAL
WOMEN OF THE WORLD
AWARDS CELEBRATION

*“Celebrating Women as
Changemakers!”*

Chaired by
Calvert County Commission for Women

March 16, 2024



Inspiring and empowering generations through change....

“We need women at all levels, including the top, to change the dynamic, reshape the conversation, to make sure women’s voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored.”

— Coretta Scott King, author & activist

“If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.”

—Shirley Chisholm, co-founder, National Women’s Political Caucus

Today we celebrate eleven outstanding women who have made a significant contribution to our community. These women have uniquely impacted Calvert County, its residents, and our environment. Too often, the contributions made by women go unnoticed or are undervalued.

Not today.

It’s important to offer recognition and thanks, and to celebrate success, because we still have a long road ahead. There is so much more to do to improve the lives of women and girls in our county, our state and our nation.

The Calvert County Commission for Women remains as dedicated as ever to paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable future.

PROGRAM

WELCOME

Kathryn Marsh

Chair, Calvert County Commission for Women

INSPIRATION

Rev. Alice Thompson

Chaplain, Calvert Health

INTRODUCTION OF PROGRAM

Christy Jones

WOW Chair, CC Commission for Women

FEATURED SPEAKER

Lt. Governor Aruna Miller

Lt. Governor, State of Maryland

BREAK

[5 minutes]

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

WOW Partners

CLOSING COMMENTS

Christy Jones

WOW Chair

GREET AWARDEES IN BREAKOUT GROUPS

All Participants



THE 21st ANNUAL WOMEN OF THE WORLD CELEBRATION AND AWARDS CEREMONY

The Women of the World (WOW) Awards Celebration, which recognizes the outstanding contributions and achievements of Calvert County women and girls, is an annual event that originated through the collaboration of two distinguished organizations established for and about women, the League of Women Voters-Calvert County and the Calvert County Commission for Women. For many years WOW was co-chaired by both LWV-CC and the CCCW, and gradually other organizations joined the effort. Now, the Commission oversees the event, and this year seven non-profit organizations join with the Commission for Women in honoring women and girls who are leaders and who improve our county.

The Calvert County Commission for Women was established in 1976 as an official county commission with its members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. In addition to being a voice for and resource about women, to identifying issues that affect women and educating the public about those issues, the Commission for Women recognizes the achievements and contributions of the women and girls of Calvert County. The CCCW held precursor Outstanding Achievement Awards beginning in 1978.

The first WOW celebration was held in 2002. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were forced to cancel our planned WOW event in 2020. By 2021 WOW partners did not want to wait any longer and WOW was held virtually for the first time. This could not have been accomplished without the excellent technical support of the Calvert Library. Because of the success of that year's virtual program, WOW has been held as a virtual event ever since. This year is the 21st Celebration of WOW in Calvert County.

A highlight of the WOW Celebrations on Zoom is the opportunity to visit and congratulate the various WOW awardees at the end of the formal program. We hope that family, friends, community leaders, elected officials and others will join awardees in their breakout rooms at the end of the formal program today.

We trust you will enjoy and be inspired by the women being honored today. We celebrate them, and we celebrate the 21st occurrence of this amazing celebration. We are glad you are here to celebrate with us.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER



LT. GOVERNOR ARUNA MILLER

LT. GOVERNOR, STATE OF MARYLAND

Aruna Miller is the 10th Lieutenant Governor of the state of Maryland. She is the second woman to serve as Lieutenant Governor and the first woman of color and immigrant elected to statewide office in Maryland.

Born in Andhra Pradesh, India, Miller and her family immigrated to the United States when she was 7 years old. The daughter of a mechanical engineer, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from the Missouri University of Science and Technology.

Miller has devoted her life to public service and removing systemic barriers to opportunity.

As a civil and transportation engineer in Montgomery County's Department of Transportation, Miller worked to improve the safety of the public and alleviate traffic by creating equitable access to transportation throughout the county. For 25 years, she oversaw programs that advanced access to schools and employment centers, and made community facilities safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and people with differing abilities.

From 2010 to 2018, she represented District 15 in the Maryland House of Delegates, where she worked with her constituents to create legislation to invest in STEM education, streamline the regulatory process for small businesses, and was a champion for working families, survivors of domestic abuse, and the environment.

For over 30 years, she has lived in Montgomery County with her husband David, where they raised three daughters.

As Lieutenant Governor, her policy profile includes matters relating to transportation, mental health, and STEM equity.

The Lieutenant Governor also chairs Maryland's first Council on Interfaith Outreach, which convenes faith leaders from across religions and across the state of Maryland to bridge divides, increase religious tolerance, end hate, and better serve all communities.

2024 WOMEN OF THE WORLD PARTNERS AND HONOREES

CALVERT COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

ADVOCACY:

Presented by Adrienne Clark, CCCW Commissioner

Dawn Collins

BUSINESS

Presented by Diana Wharton, CCCW Vice-Chair

Rhonda Thomas

SERVICE:

Presented by Amber Yates, CCCW Commissioner

Dr. Laura Fletcher, DVM

WOMAN OF TOMORROW:

Presented by Sierra Mitchell, CCCW Commissioner

Mariah Wiseman



CALVERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Presented by Tassia Weems, Executive Director

Diane Harrison

CALVERT COUNTY MINORITY BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Presented by Roseanna Vogt, CCMBA Vice President

Sonia Hinds

CALVERT LIBRARY

Presented by Carrie Willson, Executive Director

Dr. Jen Sturge

COMMUNITY MEDIATION CENTER OF CALVERT

Presented by Sheri Tardio, CMC Executive Director

Marisa Sanchez

CONCERNED BLACK WOMEN OF CALVERT

Presented by Sinetra Bowdry, CBW President

Inez Claggett

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALVERT COUNTY

Presented by Gladys White, LWV-CC 1st Vice President

Pat Pease

NAACP – CALVERT COUNTY

Presented by Art Simpson, NAACP-CC 3rd Vice President

Debora Jones Harris



DAWN COLLINS

**CALVERT COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
ADVOCACY AWARD**

The Calvert County Commission for Women is pleased to present Dawn Collins with the 2024 Outstanding Achievement for Advocacy Award.

Dawn has dedicated herself to a life of advocacy for public health, service, and combating hate-fueled violence. In her work with the League of Women Voters of Calvert County, she has served as a representative to the Calvert County 2020 Census Complete County Committee. She has supported LWVCC's efforts on Police Accountability to assure fair and equitable representation of citizens.

In addition to her work with LWVCC, Dawn is active with a number of community organizations, including LEAP Forward, Inc., Calvert County NAACP, Board Member for Board of Maryland Victim Services, National Coalition of 100 Black Women, and more.

Through all her volunteer efforts, her greatest achievement is her advocacy work in the area of hate crimes prevention and prosecution. In 2017, her son, 2nd Lt. Richard W. Collins III, was violently murdered on the University of Maryland, College Park's campus in an unprovoked attack by a follower of a white nationalist hate-group. Since then Mrs. Collins has been a leader in the fight against hate crimes, particularly in the State of Maryland. She has been instrumental in achieving legislation that address issues in the legal process to prosecute hate crimes.

She is co-founder of the 2nd Lt. Richard W. Collins III Foundation and of the Social Justice Alliance between Bowie State University and the University of Maryland, College Park.

In September 2023, Dawn received the distinct honor of being named a National Uniter Against Hate by President Joe Biden. Congratulations Dawn!



RHONDA THOMAS

CALVERT COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN BUSINESS AWARD

Rhonda Thomas understands that education matters, and, for many who attain it, education is the gift that keeps on giving.

Ms. Thomas has been passionate about education since her Calvert High School days when her guidance counselor, Wallace Lorenzo Leeper, encouraged her to dream big and consider engineering for her field of study and potential career. Rhonda took his advice and established a successful career in engineering, during which time she worked on major defense and aviation programs, travelling to 42 out of 50 states and internationally.

Grateful for Mr. Leeper's guidance, Rhonda decided to pay it forward, and with the help of friends, in 2001 she founded a 501(c)3 non-profit organization called Launching Educational Assistance Programs Forward, Inc. LEAP Forward's programs include scholarships, a National Society of Black Engineers chapter, and Destined4Success, a mentoring program for teenage girls in the community. For her efforts, Rhonda Thomas is being awarded the 2024 Outstanding Achievement for Business Award .

Rhonda is dedicated to providing minority and underrepresented female students in Calvert County the opportunities and the hope to imagine a better future. Last year, her scholarship program awarded over \$60,000 in scholarships, more than half of which went to Calvert County females.

Because of Rhonda's initiative, leadership, expertise, vision, and perseverance, on July 26, 2024, LEAP Forward will celebrate 23 years of service. Congratulations Rhonda!



DR. LAURA FLETCHER, DVM

CALVERT COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN SERVICE AWARD

The Calvert County Commission for Women is pleased to present the 2024 Outstanding Achievement for Service Award to Dr. Laura Fletcher. A committed veterinarian and caring leader, she has served our community for decades, first volunteering at the Prince Frederick Animal Hospital at the age of 8. While she moved away from Calvert County for her studies, she came back to serve the Calvert community and practice medicine.

Currently a veterinarian at the Prince Frederick Animal Hospital, Dr. Fletcher consistently shows compassion and professionalism to her animal patients and their families. This compassion extends to her volunteer work with the Friends of the Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter, where she sits as a board member.

Dr. Fletcher truly represents the values behind CCCW's mission. She is an example for Calvert County's youth and demonstrates to young women that they can do anything they put their mind to. Two of Dr. Fletcher's previous mentees have gone on to become veterinarians themselves. One of Dr. Fletcher's mentees writes "Dr. Fletcher has been a mentor to me for the past three years while I have been a veterinary technician. During this time, she has proven to be one of the most supportive women in my life."

Dr. Fletcher never hesitates to support and educate the women of the practice as well as the women of Calvert County. Congratulations Dr. Fletcher!



MARIAH WISEMAN

**CALVERT COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
WOMAN OF TOMORROW AWARD**

This year's Woman of Tomorrow Outstanding Achievement Award goes to Mariah Wiseman of Huntingtown High School. At 18, she is already making a notable impact on her community.

On top of being an exemplary student with a 4.2 GPA and working two jobs, Mariah is also a member of Huntingtown High School's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). Through the FBLA, Mariah led multiple projects to help educate high school students on the professional possibilities Calvert County has to offer.

Over the past 12 months Mariah planned, organized, and implemented two successful career fairs bringing in over 60 businesses and 600 students. Because of her efforts, the Calvert County Department of Economic Development has seen an uptick in businesses volunteering with local schools.

In addition to the career fairs, Mariah created and planned a Shark Tank competition within the FBLA. Over 30 students participated and local business owners volunteered as mentors to the students. The Shark Tank project was so successful, the Board of County Commissioners presented Wiseman and the HHS FBLA Shark Tank Competitors a proclamation on behalf of Entrepreneurship Week.

Mariah has been described using words such as leader, determined, hardworking, and dedicated. Her initiative and drive has set her apart. Always willing to step up and take ownership, Mariah has an innate ability to lead and help others. Congratulations Mariah! We can't wait to see what the future has in store for you!



DIANE HARRISON

CALVERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Calvert County Historical Society pays tribute to its 2024 Women of the World honoree, Diane Harrison.

Diane was raised in Calvert County, where she met and married her husband, Griff. Griff's career took them to Fairfax County, VA where they raised their four sons and lived for 36 years. While living in Virginia, Diane was President of the Virginia State Society, and served on the board of the Virginia Chamber Orchestra as their Special Events Chairman. When Griff retired in 2011, they returned to their beloved Calvert County, and built a retirement home on the Chesapeake Bay in Plum Point.

Diane's love of researching and documenting local history led her to become a member of the Calvert County Historical Society. In 2016 she became a CCHS Board member and is currently serving in her third term.

While serving on the CCHS Board, Diane has spearheaded the planning and execution of multiple large projects. In 2021, and through her diligence, the Historical Society received the Seed Grant which enabled CCHS to capture images and video recordings of disappearing barns in Calvert County. A concurrent exhibition of barns by local artists and photographers celebrated Calvert County's farming and agricultural heritage. Diane also played a vital role in the initiation and accomplishment of community outreach programs such as the Front Porch Summer Concert Series, a Quilt Show at Linden, a Symposium partnered with the Calvert Marine Museum on the Sinking of the Levin J. Marvel, and the Commemoration of author William Hulbert Footner.

Diane continues to diligently share local history through events. On behalf of the Board and members of the Calvert County Historical Society, thank you, Diane, for sharing your love of Calvert. Your efforts have provided a wealth of information that will be preserved in the CCHS Archives for sharing with generations to come.



SONIA HINDS

CALVERT COUNTY MINORITY BUSINESS ALLIANCE

The Calvert County Minority Business Alliance is pleased to recognize the many contributions of Sonia Delicia Sealey Hinds. Born and raised in Panama, Central America she is a descendant of migrants from Barbados and Jamaica who worked on the construction of the Panama Canal which was completed in 1914. In 1970 Ms. Hinds arrived in the United States to enroll in college at Pace College in Manhattan, New York, and a year later she transferred to Wagner College on Staten Island to pursue a nursing degree. After graduation, she married Alberto Hinds, her childhood sweetheart.

In 1976 Ms. Hinds was commissioned into the US Army Nurse Corps where she served for five years at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. She was later recommissioned into the US Public Health Service and served at St. Elizabeths Hospital for 19 years. During that time, she attended Howard University where she received a Master of Science in Nursing degree in 1986. In 2002 she retired from the military with the rank of Captain/06 after 24 years of service.

In 2003, with the help of community leaders, Ms. Hinds founded Barstow Acres Children's Center, a 501(c)3 non-profit children and family counseling center, created to bring diversity and quality mental health services to Calvert County. Working there as Executive Director and with the help of her illustrious team, Sonia Hinds has provided services to hundreds of children and families at its location in Prince Frederick for more 21 years. The Minority Business Alliance thanks and congratulates Sonia for her dedication and leadership to many in Calvert County for the past 21 years.



DR. JEN STURGE

CALVERT LIBRARY

Over her career, Dr. Jen Sturge has held national leadership positions and received national recognition for her work in and for school libraries and their students. Calvert Library is honoring her for her commitment to Calvert County students and Calvert Library. For over a decade, she has applied her prodigious energy and enthusiasm to developing a robust partnership between the public school system and Calvert Library, thereby multiplying the positive impact of shared resources.

She advocated for and supported the implementation of CRAB cards, a Calvert Library card for every CCPS student helping Calvert County become the second library in the state to offer this service to students. These digital cards provide student-access to the public library's extensive resources to supplement school-provided learning materials. CRAB cards provide access to Homework Help, primary source history documents, writing lab coaching and more.

Dr. Sturge brought Calvert Library to the CCPS table on any project she thought would benefit from the partnership. She invited library staff to make presentations to new teachers during orientation. She supported Calvert Library in providing Lunch Bunch book clubs in elementary schools to inspire reluctant readers. She partnered with Calvert Library to bring exciting authors like Jason Reynolds to Calvert County.

Dr. Sturge has consistently been at the forefront of championing the importance of collections that represent various cultures, perspectives, and experiences, recognizing the profound impact this diversity has on fostering empathy, tolerance, and a deeper understanding of the world we live in. She has also spearheaded multiple events that promote a love of reading to create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment for Calvert County students.

Her work has elevated Calvert Library in the consciousness of CCPS administration and staff and has been the catalyst for more extensive and meaningful partnerships across the school and library systems, benefitting all Calvert County as resources are leveraged, use is multiplied, and Calvert County students are celebrated and positively impacted. Calvert Library is pleased to honor Dr. Sturge for her many contributions!



MARISA SANCHEZ

COMMUNITY MEDIATION CENTER OF CALVERT

Dr. Marisa Sanchez has volunteered with the Community Mediation Center of Calvert for three years, mediating first over Zoom during the pandemic, then in-person, and now also as a Day of Trial mediator in District Court.

Marisa moved to Calvert County in 2012. Looking for opportunities to serve and meet people in her new community, her husband Ron Crupi volunteered her strategic planning expertise to several boards on which he served, including the Calvert Library Board of Trustees, the Calvert Library Foundation, and the Friends of Jefferson Patterson Park, and Marisa has enjoyed sharing her business skills with these organizations. She also volunteers with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, speaking to patients and caregivers in the Mid-Atlantic region to provide information about services and matching patients who want to connect with peers.

Professionally, Marisa recently celebrated her 20th anniversary as an independent organization development and change management consultant to federal government agencies and large private sector firms in the DC/Baltimore region. Prior to starting her consulting practice, she worked at American Management Systems in Fairfax for 14 years. With a PhD in human and organization systems, she works with leaders to uncover the underlying causes of organizational challenges and to gain insights in improving and implementing organizational effectiveness. Her consulting practice focuses on strategic planning and execution, change leadership, organization design, culture change, leadership coaching, team effectiveness, and group facilitation.

Marisa is an invaluable volunteer at the Community Mediation Center of Calvert. She excels as a transformative mediator and is always seeking to learn more. She shares her knowledge with other mediators and is a skilled presenter.

In addition to volunteering and spending time with family, Marisa enjoys traveling, cooking, boating, and entertaining at home on St. Leonard's Creek.



INEZ CLAGGETT

CONCERNED BLACK WOMEN OF CALVERT COUNTY

Inez N. Claggett became a champion for change at an early age when she encouraged her high school classmates to conduct a letter-writing campaign to re-install afterschool activity buses. She spoke before her entire high school community to disrupt an unorganized student walkout, and these actions led not only to student success, but gave her a passion for advocacy and community service and the courageous spirit to speak for others.

Ms. Claggett attended Anne Arundel County Public Schools but has long and deep familial roots in Calvert County. She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Delaware and her master's degree in accounting and financial management from the University of Maryland Global Campus in College Park. She is certified in public sector auditing, internal controls, and risk management.

Her many skills have made her a valuable volunteer in Calvert County. She is a charter member of the National Coalition for 100 Black Women, Inc., Southern Maryland Chapter, and the Financial Secretary for the Southern Maryland Chain Chapter of The Links, Inc. She has held leadership roles in the Calvert County Democratic Womens' Club, the Calvert County Commission for Women, the Calvert County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Concerned Black Women of Calvert County, the League of Women Voters of Calvert County, Calvert County Minority Business Alliance, and several local youth sports organizations.

Ms. Claggett served on the Calvert County Board of Education's Citizen's Advisory Committee for five years prior to becoming a Board Member in 2019. During her first year on the Board, she backed policy changes to restrict the use of restraint and seclusion within the schools, with a vision of abolishing the use of seclusion. She served as Vice President in 2019 and 2022 and as President in 2020 and 2023. In 2021 she received the Minority Recognition Award for Leadership from the Maryland State Educators Association.

For her commitment and leadership on behalf of so many, Concerned Black Women congratulates Inez N. Claggett for their 2024 Women of the World award.



PAT PEASE

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALVERT COUNTY

A resident of Calvert County for 44 years, Pat Pease began her work with the League of Women Voters – Calvert County in the 1980s. Prior to this, she began her career as a middle school Reading and Language Arts teacher in Illinois and later in Annapolis, Maryland. After six years of teaching, Pat moved from the classroom into the world of support, care, and advocacy, specializing in issues of domestic abuse and addiction.

Initially, she worked in Bowie, co-founding the Bowie Women’s Center, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Her employment in Calvert County began with the management of a state-funded 24-hour domestic violence hotline and a drug treatment services program. When Calvert County created the Abused Persons Program, Pat managed its creation within the Health Department, providing expanded services for women, adolescents, and children impacted by family and sexual abuse, and required services for those charged with abuse by the court system; with the aid of additional federal and state funds, that program was later renamed the Crisis Intervention Center. She subsequently helped create Safe Harbor, a shelter program that still provides a secure living space for women and children who have been threatened or abused. Her significant contributions led to her working directly with the Maryland State House and Senate, helping to create legislation to strengthen laws protecting the safety of women and children from harmful behavior.

As a County volunteer Pat has shared her skills with the Calvert County Commission for Women, the Community Mediation Center, Calvert Collaborative for Children and Youth, #Our Common Calvert, Community Ministry of Calvert County and Closing the Gap Coalition. Pat’s work with the LWV-CC has brought her to a strong sense of regard for the women dedicated to expanding Calvert County’s awareness and involvement in doing what is best for the community. For her dedication and work over the years, the League thanks and congratulates Pat Pease.



DEBORA JONES HARRIS

NAACP – CALVERT COUNTY

The NAACP-Calvert County Chapter is happy to recognize Debora Jones Harris. Ms. Harris is a Calvert County native who grew up in a large family with five sisters and five brothers. She graduated from Calvert High School, received a bachelor's degree from Bowie State University and a Master's degree from Towson State University.

Ms. Harris taught grades 2, 1 and kindergarten (in that order) at Mt. Harmony and Plum Point Elementary schools, and served as Calvert County Public Schools' Supervisor of Early Childhood Education for eleven years. During that time, she wrote a grant that allowed her to establish the Judy Center. Later, she, along with the United Way of Calvert, wrote the grant that resulted in the creation of the HIPPY and Healthy Families program. These programs support and empower parents to be their child's first teacher, ensuring that their children are ready for school.

After retirement from Calvert County Public Schools, she started an education consulting business, working for the Maryland State Department of Education as well as with several counties in the state. She was also a trainer and educator for teachers throughout the state and at Head Start centers.

She has served on many boards in the County, including the United Way of Calvert, Calvert County Family Network, and the Calvert County Fair Board. At Calvert County Baptist Church, she is a deacon and leads such ministries as Pastoral Care, Funeral Coordinator, Newcomer's orientation and the church school.

Deborah Jones Harris is currently the President of the NAACP of Calvert County, an organization that strives to "eliminate discrimination and accelerate the well-being, education and economic security of Black people and all people of color." The Calvert County branch of this civil rights organization has nearly 300 members and is actively working within the County, the State of Maryland, and nationally.



2024 WOMEN OF THE WORLD PLANNING COMMITTEE

Calvert County Commission for Women

Christy Jones
Chair

Leila Boyer

Joan D. Winship

Sheri Tardio

Calvert County Historical Society

Tassia Weems

Calvert County Minority Business Alliance

Rev. Barbara Buchanan

Calvert Library

Robyn Truslow

Community Mediation Center of Calvert

Sheri Tardio

Concerned Black Women of Calvert County

Norma Onley

League of Women Voters of Calvert County

Norma Onley

NAACP - Calvert County

Norma Onley



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Anthony Greene of Creative Entertainment and Media for providing videotaping and technical support

Alaina Patel, Jordyn Eppard-Wilcots, and Destiny Brown from Patuxent High School in Lusby for providing music during the event

CalvART Gallery for providing their gallery for Commission for Women to hold a reception for its four Outstanding Achievement Awardees

Calvert Library for providing technical support

Faye Kepner of the Calvert Library and professional photographer for taking photographs of awardees and the Calvert Library for providing her time

Representatives of our local, state and national government and their office staff for providing keepsake official citations for each awardee

Printing Press Inc. for its professional printing expertise



You are invited to join the Calvert County Commission for Women throughout the year at other Commission events. Please check the CCCW webpage for ongoing updates: www.calvertcountymd.gov/672/Commission-for-Women.

CALVERT COUNTY
Maryland
Commission for Women

30 Duke Street, Suite 102

Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Email: calvertwomen@gmail.com

www.calvertcountymd.gov/672/Commission-for-Women