



FEATURED

Many women honored at 15th annual WOW luncheon

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The 15th annual Women of the World awards celebration and luncheon was held March 11 at the College of Southern Maryland Prince Frederick campus, where local and state elected officials joined in honoring Calvert County women for their leadership and the relentless work they do in their respective capacities.

Longtime Register of Wills Margaret Phipps (D), the keynote speaker for the program, spent much of her speech reminiscing on different actions taken for women's suffrage in the country and, specifically, in Calvert County.

Citing the Baltimore Sun, Phipps described a group of four women and a man who left Baltimore in 1915 to travel to St. Mary's County in a covered wagon with the words "votes for women" depicted on the side.

The group saw perilous weather during their travel, but when they arrived in Prince Frederick, Judge John P. Briscoe met them and offered his and the courthouse's services to them. Three of the women spent the night in the courthouse on their camping cots, while the fourth woman and her husband found accommodations at a local hotel.

"So that was Calvert County's part of the activity as we were working towards suffrage. Now we all have the right to vote, but how are we going to show that we are going to be leaders?" Phipps rhetorically asked.

Phipps went on to name every woman who has served as an elected official for Calvert County, beginning with Louisa M. Monnett, the county's treasurer in 1934, and ending with Tracy McGuire and Dawn Balinski, who won reclaimed seats on the board of education in the 2016 election.

Notable women with Calvert ties were also recognized, like civil rights pioneer Harriet Elizabeth Brown and Judith Catchpole, an indentured servant accused of murdering her unborn child. Catchpole was tried and acquitted in Calvert County court in 1656 by one of the earliest all-female juries in the country.

"As I look around, there is an enormous amount of talent in this room and in our county. But you know what, at the present time, there is not one woman in a policy setting position in this county: county commissioners, delegates [or] senators. We need to think about that," Phipps told the audience.





Nineteen women and girls were honored by 12 organizations at the WOW luncheon, hosted by the Calvert County Commission for Women and League of Women Voters. Outstanding achievement awards were presented to Northern High School junior Tiffany Jackson for advocacy, Gayle Reid of Reid & Reid Inc. for business leadership and 11-year-old Huntingtown Elementary School student Emily Dove for service.

Dia Brown, Samirah Brown, Nat Todd and Brianna Workcuff from Our Common Calvert — a youth leadership organization purposed to develop leadership, build unity across the community and unify organized action — were presented the Women of Tomorrow Award.

Other awardees included Mariann Crisman, school board president Pamela Cousins, Maureen Hoffman, Mary Rockefeller, Lisa Sanders, Cindy Parlett, Calvert Nature Society Executive Director Anne Sundermann, Susan Rork of the Community Mediation Center of Calvert, Veronica Phelps, former Commission for Women chair Margaret Dunkle, Tonya Wilkerson and former Calvert NAACP president Joyce Freeland.

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