

Hillsborough County  
**Women's Hall of Fame**  
Class of 2012 Induction Ceremony



COMMISSION ON THE  
**Status**  
*of*  
**Women**

June 13, 2012



## **Purpose of the Hillsborough County Women's Hall of Fame**

The Hillsborough County Women's Hall of Fame was created by the Hillsborough County Commission on the Status of Women to honor women who, through their lives and efforts, have made significant contributions to the improvement of life for women and for all citizens of Hillsborough County. The Commission maintains and facilitates the permanent Women's Hall of Fame display at the Tampa Convention Center.

## **Purpose of the Commission on the Status of Women**

The Hillsborough County Commission on the Status of Women was created April 16, 2003 to advise the Board of County Commissioners, County administration, and all agencies and persons in Hillsborough County with respect to all matters pertaining to the status of women.



The Commission is comprised of thirteen members. Seven are appointed by members of the Board of County Commissioners to represent their district, and six are permanent seats held by Hillsborough County organizations.

Denise Chavez	Commissioner Sandra L. Murman, Vice Chair
Rachel Marks Feinman	Commissioner Kevin Beckner
Yvonne Fry	Commissioner Al Higginbotham
Dotti Groover-Skipper	Commissioner Ken Hagan, Chair
Susan Leisner	Commissioner Mark Sharpe
Ann Porter	Commissioner Lesley "Les" Miller, Jr.
Laura Rambeau-Lee	Commissioner Victor D. Crist
Linda D'Aquila	League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County
Lydia Medrano, Ph.D.	Hispanic Professional Women's Association, Inc.
April Monteith	Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce
Alice Thompson	The Centre
Geraldine I. Twine	National Council for Negro Women
	The Spring of Tampa Bay, Inc.

# **PROGRAM**

## **Reception**

### **Welcome**

Yvonne Fry, Commission Chair

### **Invocation**

Dotti Groover-Skipper, Commission Vice Chair

### **Purpose of COSW**

Linda D'Aquila

### **Introduction of Speaker**

Honorable Pam Iorio

### **Keynote Speaker**

Honorable Dottie Berger MacKinnon

### **Induction Ceremony**

Yvonne Fry

#### **2012 INDUCTEE**

#### **PRESENTER**

Phyllis Hendler Busansky

Ellen Brown

Commissioner Kevin Beckner

Gwendolyn Martin Miller

Honorable Pam Iorio

Commissioner Lesley "Les" Miller, Jr.

Jan Kaminis Platt

Honorable Susan Bucklew

Mickey Castor

### **Closing**

Yvonne Fry

# Phyllis Hendler Busansky

March 30, 1937 - June 23, 2009



**Phyllis Hendler Busansky** was born in Hartford, Connecticut and graduated from Wheaton College with a bachelor's degree in English literature. She received an MBA from the Heller School at Brandeis University.

In 1979, the Busanskys moved to Tampa, where she served as the Hillsborough County Director of Aging Services, Director of Human Resources, and as a Hillsborough County Commissioner (1989-1997). She was the first Executive Director of Florida's welfare-to-work

agency, Work and Gain Economic Self Sufficiency Program (WAGES), under former Governors Lawton Chiles and Jeb Bush.

Phyllis focused her efforts on improving life in the county and state in the areas of aging services, affordable healthcare, juvenile justice, and economic development. She co-founded the local health education enterprise, Healthy Together, spearheaded numerous health prevention projects in the community, and served on the faculty of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Phyllis led an initiative in Hillsborough County that created a nationally acclaimed indigent healthcare program recognized by the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government. The program, which was funded primarily by a sales tax, reached more than 60 percent of the eligible population while reducing the County's overall bill for indigent health care.

In 1995, *Governing Magazine* named her *Public Official of the Year*. The Suncoast Girl Scout Council named Phyllis a *Woman of Distinction* in 1999. She ran for Congress before being elected as Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections in 2008. In 2009, the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners created the *We the People Award* and, renamed the Westshore Senior Center in her honor.

Her 21-year political career earned her a national reputation for social change, unquestionable ethics, integrity, inspiration, and transparency.

Phyllis is survived by her husband Sheldon, sons Alexander and Edward, daughter Rebecca, and nine grandchildren.

# Gwendolyn Martin Miller

August 2, 1934



**Gwendolyn Martin Miller** was born in Tampa, attended Middleton High School, and received her Bachelor of Science and Master of Education degrees from Florida A & M University. In 2003, she received the University's *Distinguished Alumnus Award*. She was an elementary school teacher for Hillsborough County from 1957-1970, and was the school district's Human Relations Specialist for 24 years.

Gwen was first elected to the Tampa City Council (District 5) in 1995. She served as Chair from 2004 to 2008, and Chair Pro-Tem from 2008 until her retirement in 2011. During her tenure on City Council, Gwen became the first black woman to serve as Chair. She accomplished another first by becoming the first black woman to be elected to an at-large City Council seat (District 1) in 2003.

Gwen was dedicated to developing and strengthening youth and families through educational, recreational and social opportunities. As a Councilwoman, she fought to improve the quality of life for the residents of Tampa and spearheaded many neighborhood initiatives; including funding for the renovation of the Belmont Little League, and community centers for Woodlawn Terrace and Williams Park. In 2011, the Woodland Terrace Park Community Center in East Tampa was named the Gwendolyn Miller Community Center in her honor.

Gwen's list of awards and honors includes the *Top Ladies of Distinction's Women of Distinction Award* in 2011; Tampa-Hillsborough Urban League's *Milestone Award* in 1995; the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. *Outstanding Service Award*, also in 1995; the *Hank Warren Memorial Award* from the City of Tampa's Community Relations Office in 1994; and in 1991, she was named as a National Association of Counties *County Point of Light*.

Gwen served on many community boards and civic and social organizations. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, The Charmettes (past national president), and National President of the Silhouettes of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. She is a member of New Mt. Zion M. B. Church, and is married to former State Senator and current Hillsborough County Commissioner, Lesley "Les" Miller, Jr. They have four children – James Jones, Arthur Jones, Lesley Miller, III, and Le'Jean Miller Harper – and six grandchildren..

# Jan Kaminis Platt

September 27, 1936



**Jan Kaminis Platt** was born in St. Petersburg, Florida. The family soon moved to Tampa, where Jan's civic and political career began. She was an exemplary student at Hillsborough High School, and was voted *Most Likely to Succeed*. Jan attended Girls State in Tallahassee, where she acquired her love for government. As a political science and public administration undergraduate student at Florida State University, she was elected *Most Outstanding Senior Woman*, President of the Student Senate, and Vice President of the Student Body. Jan graduated cum laude as a Phi Beta Kappa in 1958,

receiving her bachelor's degree in Political Science. She attended one year of law school at the University of Florida, where she was the only woman in the school.

Jan taught history at Hillsborough and Plant High Schools; was a Field Director for the Tampa Girl Scout Council and later served as volunteer president of the Suncoast Girl Scout Council. She co-founded the Junior Discussion Group, a unit of the League of Women Voters, for young women interested in better government.

Jan's public service includes four years on Tampa City Council (1974-1978); she represented local government on the 1976 Florida Constitutional Revision Commission; 24 years as a Hillsborough County Commissioner (1978-2002); as well as a variety of appointments to local, state, and national committees, boards, and task forces. An avid fisherman, she was a driving force behind the creation of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's Agency on Bay Management, the Environmental Land Acquisition Program (ELAP), and Tampa Bay's selection into the National Estuary Program, and she proposed the successful merger of the City and County libraries. The University of South Florida Library Special Collections archived her service records where they remain available for public review.

In 1992, Jan was named a *Woman of Distinction* by the Suncoast Girl Scout Council. In 2000 she received the Hillsborough County Bar Association's *Liberty Bell Award*. In 2010, she was awarded *Humanitarian of the Year* by the Florida Head Start Association, and was recognized with the *Herman W. Goldner Award for Regional Leadership* by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. Jan was named to the American Library Association's *Freedom to Read Honor Roll* and she received the *Best Friend of the Year Award* from the Friends of the Library of Hillsborough County, Inc., in 1999. The Jan Kaminis Platt Regional Library was dedicated to her and opened to the public on December 11, 2000.

Jan is married to William R. "Bill" Platt and they have a son, Kevin, daughter-in-law, Michele, and granddaughter, Emma.



## 2011 Charter Class Inductees

### **Mary T. Cash**

First Florida registered nurse of African American heritage

### **Elizabeth “Betty” Castor**

First woman elected to the Hillsborough County Commission and the Florida State Cabinet, First Woman President of USF

### **Helen Gordon Davis**

First woman from Hillsborough County elected to the Florida House of Representatives

### **Cecile Waterman Essrig**

First woman elected to Hillsborough County School Board

### **Pat Collier Frank**

County Commissioner, Florida House of Representatives, Florida Senate, Clerk of Court

### **Sandra W. Freedman**

First woman Mayor of City of Tampa

### **Clara C. Frye**

Founded first Negro Hospital in Hillsborough County

### **Adela Hernandez Gonzmart**

Concert pianist, patroness of Hispanic Culture in Ybor City and founder of the Ballet Folklorico of Ybor

### **Sylvia Rodriguez Kimbell**

First African American woman elected to Hillsborough County Commission

### **Sadye Gibbs Martin**

First woman Mayor of the City of Plant City, the first female African American elected mayor of a major city in Florida, educator

## Patron Sponsors

**CHASE**  **J.P.Morgan**

Susan and Richard Leisner



## Table Sponsors



**girl scouts**  
1912-2012



**HILL WARD HENDERSON**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



New Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church/  
Deaconess Ministry

Barbara Twine / Larry Family



## Thank You



League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County  
for their outstanding support.

Congresswoman Kathy Castor, for the complementary book,  
*Women in Congress 1917-2006*, provided to each inductee.

Liz Dunham for research and writing contributions.

