



Carole Byrd - Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Inductee

Born locally, Carole Byrd is a semi-lifelong resident, minus the 20 years she lived in Alabama. Always involved in community and arts groups, she owned “Carole’s Piano Studio” and taught piano for 20 years, in Niceville, maintaining 80+ students. Her love of the arts activated roles in Children’s Theater Board, Piano Instructors Guild, Talent Search Board and directing Children’s Show-Choirs. From chairing a high school leadership workshop and judging local and state Distinguished Young Women (DYW) programs, she developed an eye for young women with potential talent and leadership. She is best known for establishing the DYW program here in Fort Walton Beach. Knowing she’d be returning to our area from Birmingham, she juggled both programs for 4 years, driving to Florida twice monthly. She, and daughter Betsy, co-directed the Okaloosa DYW program until becoming DYW directors for the state of Florida. Other involvements include D.A.R.E. Board, Literacy Education Board, and ABWA. Now in retirement, Carole enjoys 100 Women Who Care, FWB Chamber Women Connect, Ambassador of FWB Chamber and is a volunteer in the Chamber office.



2021

Hall of Fame Inductees

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Charlotte Eschmann -

Military Inductee

Kathy Houchins -

Community Service Inductee

Dr. Diane Kelley -

Education Inductee

Ginger Bowden Madden -

Pioneer Inductee

Dr. Venita Morell -

Carolyn Spencer Humanitarian Inductee

Terri Harbeson Roberts -

Business Leader Inductee

Vicki Tarro -

Contemporary Inductee



Charlotte Eschmann – Military Inductee

Charlotte Eschmann’s contributions to society can be summed up in three words... “SERVICE BEFORE SELF”! A native Floridian, her service to the nation ran the gamut from Aircraft Maintenance Technician to Administrative Specialist, USAF, Aeronautical Systems Division. She returned to Okaloosa County in 1997 with husband, Karl (USAF Retired) and their two children. Armed with a master’s degree in Counseling/Psychology, Florida State licenses in Mental Health, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Treatment, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, she worked with Veterans and their families as hospice caregiver and grief counselor. She served on the Crestview Military Advisory Committee, this led her to work with Veterans dying from complications of Agent Orange. She helped bereaved family members file for survivor benefits. She was Hurlburt Field’s Nominee for Defense Advisory Council for Women in the Armed Services and recipient of the USAF Angel Pin Award for Outstanding Volunteer Services. She has dedicated herself to Traumatic Injury Support Groups, Bereavement Workshops, Women Veterans, Homeless Veterans, and Wreaths Across America. As a member of Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, she indexed over 23,000 documents verifying Patriots serving in the Revolution, thus preserving the legacy of Veteran. Charlotte’s service to the Military is undeniable.



Kathy Houchins - Community Service Inductee

Kathy arrived in Okaloosa County in 1998 and quickly adapted to her new community. She embraced the Emerald Coast and became known by her mantra of, "Beautiful Okaloosa Island," where she helped organize the Mardi Gras Parade and Ball. Kathy helped initiate Community Solutions that was key in founding One Hopeful Place, a shelter for the homeless. Kathy chaired the Greater Ft. Walton Chamber Board in 2008 and helped bring the Doolittle Raiders to our community. She led the Tourist Development Council 2010-2012. She also chaired the White Wilson Community Foundation and helped start the Little Black Dress Party. Kathy currently sits on the Board of United for a Good Cause that brings the Hope Squad peer-to-peer suicide prevention program to our schools. Continuing her leadership, she served as the president of the American Business Women's Association (ABWA) Emerald Coast Chapter, after she was selected as the Business Associate of the Year. Eglin AFB honored her with the prestigious Lifetime Ambassador Award, and she served as Honorary Commander for the 96th Mission Support Group.



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Dr. Diane Davidson – Education Inductee

Diane is a woman with a passion for education and it shows in all she does. She has a heart to serve and served in almost every capacity possible in the Okaloosa County School District. She's held administrative positions as District Coordinator of Technology & Media Services, Principal of three schools and Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment. Dr. Kelley served as Director of Principal Evaluation, Training and Support where she developed the program to train teacher leaders to become school principals. She instills a desire for excellence in her students of all ages. She's been instrumental in many of our school district's ground-breaking initiatives, such as the instructional television program, creation of Okaloosa Online school, the move of our technology lab from a trailer into an updated facility, and most recently the half-cent sales tax campaign and the Hope Squad Suicide Prevention program for schools. Now retired from the school district, Diane continues her leadership in education as Vice-Chair of the OCSD School Board.



Ginger Bowden Madden - Pioneer Inductee

The Honorable Ginger Bowden Madden blazed a trail when she became the first woman and the first Okaloosa County resident to serve as State Attorney for Florida's First Judicial Circuit. With an annual budget of \$19 million dollars, she leads a team of 230 prosecutors, investigators and support staff. For over 27 years, Ginger has prosecuted criminal cases in every division of criminal court and was instrumental in establishing several innovative programs, to include Florida's first Veteran's Treatment Court and Mental Health Court. She has proudly supported the Air Force Operations School by speaking to foreign and U.S. military officers about the state prosecutor's role in the U.S. justice system. Over the course of her legal career, Madden has served as President of the Okaloosa-Walton Bar Association, as a member of the Florida Association of Woman's Lawyers of Okaloosa County, and as a member of the Emerald Coast Chapter of the Federalist Society. A Cum Laude graduate of Troy State University, Madden received her B.S. degree in Business Management, and earned her law degree from Florida State University.



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Dr. Venita Morell - Carolyn Spencer Humanitarian Inductee

Dr. Venita Morell is the Carolyn Spencer Humanitarian Inductee. She serves Okaloosa County in her professional career and dedicating her personal time to the Crossroads Medical Clinic for the past 14 years. Most recently she has helped battle Covid-19 in our region and for 11 years served as an American Academy of HIV Medicine specialist, she contributes as a provider for basic life support, advanced cardiac life support and pediatric advanced life support. She has made a lasting impact on the women of our community as a physician in family planning and her special certifications treating critical diseases. She served as the Medical Director, Senior Physician and laboratory director, at the Health Department then medical director for Emergency Medical Services in Okaloosa County. Dr. Morell volunteers throughout our county, is a Trustee at NWFSC Foundation, and more recently started the Emerald Coast Music Alliance.



Terri Harbeson Roberts- Business Leader Inductee

Terri Harbeson Roberts is a member of an Okaloosa County pioneering family that enriched a legacy that spans generations, from land grants for parks, museums, and municipal buildings.

Terri built upon this legacy charting her own path founding the renowned Liza Jackson Preparatory School with two other women, that will benefit generations to come. Her expertise in financial management leadership spans four decades, initially with Okaloosa County Schools as CFO, then to the Rader Group, overseeing 15 charter schools, then developing her vision to open the premier charter school in 2000. She was appointed to Florida's Charter School Review Panel by Florida's Speaker of the House and served as President of Florida's School Finance Office Association. When her rated A+ school needed space to grow she worked tirelessly and built a 100,000 sq ft State of the Art school in July 2021. Terri led the way for the Liza Jackson Park walking path, is a member of Impact 100, 100 Women Who Care, serves on the Board of Directors of Beach Bank and is active with her church.

Terri Robert's dedication to improving our community is exemplified year after year. Her dedication to the Charter School Movement is undeniable. Her vision to design the business of education and build skillful relationships is a gift.



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Vicki Tarro - Contemporary Inductee

Vicki is committed to serving this community through the United Way and heading up the Day of Giving. She worked tirelessly with the Community Solutions board to ensure the safety of residents at One Hopeful Place (OHP) during Cold Night Shelter season and the recent opening of the Women's Shelter. All this and much more while she has worked 38 years at Fort Walton Beach Medical Center (FWBMC). She is active in many Chambers of Commerce. Vicki has been Director for Volunteers for over 20 years and they average about 15,000 service hours per year. The volunteers awarded 7 high school scholarships totaling \$15,250 to local seniors and donated \$4,000 to local non-profit agencies in 2019. Today she is Executive Assistant to the CEO and hires and supervises the Exec. Assistants, switchboard staff, all volunteers, chaplains and medical students at the hospital. In 2002 she received the Frist Humanitarian award from HCA for exemplary service. Vicki is known for her dedicated spirit and genuine concern for the welfare of others.