

MAY 19, 2023



33RD PIONEER WOMEN AWARDS

**LOCKING ARMS TO
SOLVE HOMELESSNESS**



Karen Bass
Mayor

May 19, 2023

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the City of Los Angeles, it is my sincere pleasure to welcome you to the 33rd Annual Pioneer Women Awards, honoring the theme, Locking Arms to Solve Homelessness.

Each year, the Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights), along with its Commission on the Status of Women invests in Los Angeles' women and girls by providing community-building events, inclusive programs, and equitable services to create a more just Los Angeles. The Pioneer Women Awards is an opportunity for the City of Los Angeles to honor the people who make it their lifelong mission to advance the status of women and girls within our city.

For nearly five decades the Commission on the Status of Women's mission has been to advance the general welfare of women and girls in the city of Los Angeles and to ensure that all women have full and equal access to participate in city government. This year, I am excited to join members of the Los Angeles City Council and the Commission on the Status of Women to celebrate our much-deserving honorees. These Pioneer Women are leading the effort to solve homelessness. They are purposeful and tireless leaders who advocate for the most vulnerable Angelenos, and their efforts are helping us build a safer, healthier, happier, and stronger Los Angeles.

I appreciate your contributions to our city and I extend my best wishes for a memorable celebration, which honors you for being a champion for all Angelenos.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Bass". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Karen" and last name "Bass" clearly visible.

KAREN BASS
Mayor

LACSW



CITY OF LOS ANGELES COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

MISSION

- **Inform and advise** the Mayor and City Council of the needs and challenges that Los Angeles women face, with special emphasis placed on women in City government.
- **Investigate** problems and conditions adversely affecting women
- **Recommend** solutions to problems impacting women; identify programs that offer greater opportunity and ability for Los Angeles women to pursue choices without discrimination
- **Propose** methods to alleviate gender-based inequity in job opportunities and pay
- **Promote** awareness about trends affecting roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for women
- **Maintain** relationships with advocacy groups committed to identifying and removing obstacles in order to facilitate personal development for women

Commission on the Status of Women

Erma Bernard-Gibson



Commissioner Bernard-Gibson has been a trailblazer in the advancement of women, girls, and older adults in Los Angeles since the 1990s.



Dora Quach



Commissioner Quach's mission is to represent those who are traditionally underserved such as the AAPI Community, women, and girls in Los Angeles.



Simona Grace



Commissioner Grace is an advocate for women in politics and champions policies that promote gender equity. She founded Moms in Office in 2019.



Cristina Rose



As a lobbyist, Commissioner Rose has been a pillar for women in politics. She has held various board and leadership positions throughout her career ensuring the advancement of women and girls.



Tracy D. Gray



Commissioner Gray is a leader in the movement towards equity and justice in the financial sector. Using a gender lens, she educates women on the importance of investing.



Lucig H. Danielian



Commissioner Danielian has worked on human and civil rights throughout her life and is focused on efforts to ensure that the rights of women and girls are at the forefront of policy decisions.



33RD PIONEER WOMEN AWARDS

PROGRAM

LOS ANGELES CITY HALL
FORECOURT
MAY 19, 2023
8:30 A.M.- 10:00 A.M.

WELCOME
CAPRI MADDOX
LA CIVIL RIGHTS DEPARTMENT

MAYORAL NOMINEES
MAYOR KAREN BASS

REMARKS
COUNCIL PRESIDENT PAUL KREKORIAN
COUNCILMEMBER TRACI PARK
COUNCILMEMBER HEATHER HUTT
COMMISSIONER ERMA BERNARD-GIBSON

CELEBRATING LAS FOTOS

CLOSING REMARKS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special acknowledgment to the
Los Angeles City Council for the recognition of the
Pioneer Women in their districts

COUNCILMEMBER EUNISSES HERNANDEZ, CD1

COUNCIL PRESIDENT PAUL KREKORIAN, CD2

COUNCILMEMBER BOB BLUMENFIELD, CD3

COUNCILMEMBER NITHYA RAMAN, CD4

COUNCILMEMBER KATY YAROSLAVSKY, CD5

COUNCIL DISTRICT 6

COUNCILMEMBER MONICA RODRIGUEZ, CD7

COUNCILMEMBER MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON, CD8

COUNCILMEMBER CURREN PRICE, JR., CD9

COUNCILMEMBER HEATHER HUTT, CD10

COUNCILMEMBER TRACI PARK, CD11

COUNCILMEMBER JOHN LEE, D12

COUNCILMEMBER HUGO SOTO-MARTINEZ, CD13

COUNCILMEMBER KEVIN DE LEÓN, CD14

COUNCILMEMBER TIM MCOSKER, CD15

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

HONOREE

Amy Turk



Amy Turk is the Chief Executive Officer of the Downtown Women's Center (DWC). Since 2001, Amy has held leadership positions in social work and homeless services. Amy began her tenure at DWC in 2013 as the Chief Program Officer. Appointed as CEO in early 2020, Amy has grown revenue by 60%, created a new three-year strategic plan, and is deepening DWC's focus on social justice. In the 12 years before joining DWC, Amy progressively took on more responsibilities to assist women experiencing homelessness from case management to serving for seven years as Director of Daybreak, a project of The People Concern.



MAYOR'S HONOREES

Rabbi Sharon Brous



Rabbi Sharon Brous is the senior and founding rabbi of IKAR, a Jewish community that launched in 2004 to reinvigorate Jewish practice and inspire people of faith to reclaim a soulful, justice-driven voice. In 2013, Brous blessed President Obama and then-Vice President Biden at the Inaugural National Prayer Service, and in 2021 returned to bless President Biden and Vice President Harris. Rabbi Sharon then led the White House Passover Seder with Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff. She was named the no. 1 “most influential Rabbi in America” by Newsweek/The Daily Beast and has also been recognized by The Forward and Jerusalem Post as one of the 50 most influential Jews.

Evonne Biggs is a visionary leader who strives to create liberating spaces for marginalized people through compassion and innovation. Evonne’s public health background led her to focus on addressing health inequities experienced by marginalized people, and emphasize the intersection of healthcare and housing insecurity. Through her current work with Venice Family Clinic, she has led projects resulting in the successful expansion of multidisciplinary street medicine teams, innovative use of customized mobile clinics, and the development of teaching tools for a widely sought after street medicine curriculum and training program.

Evonne Biggs



Ann Pacia



COUNCIL DISTRICT 1
HONOREE

Ann Pacia began her career with PATH in 2015 as a Care Navigator and has served Angelenos experiencing homelessness ever since. When PATH partnered with Council District 1 in 2020 to bring outreach services to those experiencing homelessness in the district, she served as Program Manager and oversaw the outreach team. Ann and the outreach team have served hundreds of individuals and families, connecting them to supportive services and helping them make it home. Ann is now PATH's Associate Director for Metro LA Programs, leading multiple outreach and service initiatives across Los Angeles, and continues to work in tandem with Councilmember Hernandez and the CD1 outreach team.

Brenda Castro

Brenda Castro began her career as a Program Manager in Service Planning Area 3 for Helpline Youth Counseling, advocating for unhoused families and families needing reunification services. She is now the Program Manager of the Whitsett West Tiny Homes Interim Housing Program, operated by Hope the Mission. Under Brenda's leadership, more participants have moved from Whitsett West to stable housing than from any other interim program in Council District 2. Whitsett West has seen the fewest voluntary absences and the most consistently high occupancy levels — above 90 percent.



COUNCIL DISTRICT 2
HONOREE

Kathy Huck



COUNCIL DISTRICT 3
HONOREE

Kathy Huck treats the unhoused residents of West San Fernando Valley with dignity and respect, serving with the understanding that we are one community. She honed her skills and perspective through decades of working with Ken Craft, CEO of Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission. Kathy will tell you she's retired now, but you would never know it by the countless hours she spends visiting encampments, cars, and RVs, and building relationships with local political, community, and faith-based leaders to support people experiencing homelessness. Kathy's mantra is, "I wouldn't give them any food that I wouldn't eat. The unhoused deserve a seat at the table and a voice in the conversation."

Sarah Hronsky

Rabbi Sarah Hronsky is the Senior Rabbi for Temple Beth Hillel. She is highly regarded for her work in social action and her close relationships with organizations that assist children, people with disabilities, and the unhoused. Rabbi Sarah is a prominent member of the council of the Los Angeles Council of Religious Leaders. In her view, adhering to the holiness code entails showing love and respect to our neighbors, regardless of any differences. She is a strong advocate of treating others the way we wish to be treated and cherishing one another as sacred.



COUNCIL DISTRICT 4
HONOREE

Margaret Gillespie



COUNCIL DISTRICT 5
HONOREE

Margaret Gillespie is the Executive VP and Director of Outreach for West LA Homeless, a nonprofit founded in 2020 to address homelessness in West LA. Margaret has lived on the Westside since 1987, and she practiced law for more than 30 years before devoting herself full-time to making a difference for those experiencing homelessness. Margaret believes in compassion through action, and her personal mission and the mission of WLAH is to create meaningful change in the lives of the unhoused by connecting people with housing and employment resources; physical, mental, and addiction healthcare services; vocational and life skills education; and by providing emotional support when no one else stands with them.

Nikki Perez was born and raised in the San Fernando Valley and has always been passionate about giving back to her community. Nikki was elected to the Burbank City Council with a record-breaking number of votes while becoming Burbank's first indigenous and openly LGBTQIA+ councilmember. As a social worker, Nikki has dedicated her career to public service and advocacy for vulnerable populations. She currently serves as the Project Manager for Kids First, the only City of LA Homelessness program that focuses on children and families by bringing together nonprofit, government, and LAUSD partners to house and bring academic success to unhoused students and their families in the Valley.

Nikki Perez



COUNCIL DISTRICT 6
HONOREE

Kim Olsen



COUNCIL DISTRICT 7
HONOREE

During the pandemic, Kim Olsen mobilized volunteers in the West San Fernando Valley to address food insecurity and distress she saw in the community, an effort that grew into West Valley Homes Yes (WVHY). As Executive Director of WVHY, Kim focuses on building collaboration across Los Angeles to support better housing, health outcomes, and overall well-being for our unhoused neighbors. WVHY has the largest volunteer-led outreach program in the Valley and serves hundreds of unhoused Angelenos each week. WVHY is launching an RV Outreach Program focused on securing support services for people living in uninhabitable vehicles.

Bernice Noflin is the CEO of Restoration Community Development Corporation. She has served as a dedicated servant to her community by ensuring our unhoused neighbors are cared for and have adequate resources available. Bernice has spearheaded the literary program at the CD8 Bridge Home shelter and leads the weekly Homeless Connect days at Mt Tabor Church, where community members receive hygiene services, food, and housing navigation. She is a tireless advocate for her community and demonstrates exemplary compassion for all.

Bernice Noflin



COUNCIL DISTRICT 8
HONOREE

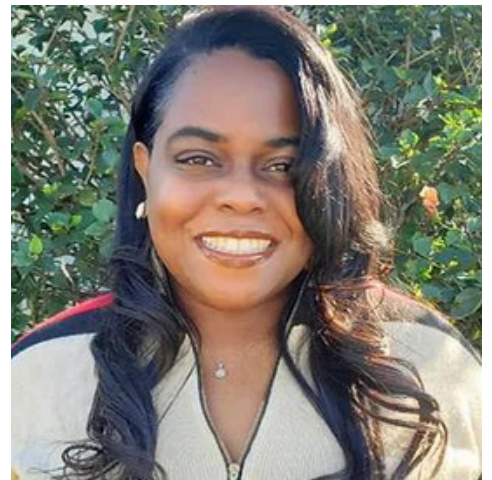
Charmaney Bayton



COUNCIL DISTRICT 9
HONOREE

Charmaney Bayton is a compassionate community advocate with 27 years of community engagement experience and more than 10 years of continued education. Charmaney provides comprehensive, multidisciplinary services to DCFS youth, abandoned youth, single mothers, and domestic violence survivors throughout Los Angeles County. In 1996, she opened her home and started “Charmaney’s Place of Refuge Resource Center,” and began offering exceptional support services to people in need from all over the metropolitan area by providing a clean, safe, and welcoming environment. Charmaney worked alongside Hope’s Nest to provide these services.

Veronica Lewis



COUNCIL DISTRICT 10
HONOREE

Veronica Lewis is a recognized leader in Los Angeles County in the homeless services, substance use support, and reentry sectors and is the Director of the Homeless Outreach Program/Integrated Care System Division of Special Service for Groups (HOPICS). As Director, Veronica oversees \$95 million in annual funding for multi-service programs, including mental health, substance use, reentry support, homeless services, and permanent housing programs and sites. Veronica tirelessly advocates for racial equity and honest dialogue about improving the health, economic, carceral, and housing disparities for Black individuals and other people of color.

Sharon Browning



COUNCIL DISTRICT 11
HONOREE

Sharon Browning has been a resident of Pacific Palisades for nearly 30 years. She is a former licensed clinical social worker and adoption worker with the Los Angeles County Department of Adoptions. Sharon received her master's degree in social work from UCLA. She has also served as Director of Training and Programming for the CORO Foundation, Southern California. Sharon has worked as Lead Facilitator for Orange County's 10-year Plan to End Homelessness and the county Mental Health Services Act Steering Committee.

Sharon Kilbride

Sharon Kilbride is a sixth-generation member of the Marquez family that held the original family land grant of the Palisades and Santa Monica Canyon in 1839. In December 2015, she received the Pacific Palisades Citizen of the Year award for her community involvement. Sharon serves as treasurer for the Santuario San Lorenzo garden located in front of the historic Marquez family cemetery. She works on preserving the cemetery and has orchestrated an educational program for fourth-graders from local elementary schools. This program teaches the students about rancho history in their own backyards.



COUNCIL DISTRICT 11
HONOREE

Josie Casarrubias



COUNCIL DISTRICT 12
HONOREE

Josie Casarrubias currently serves as Program Manager at the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. Throughout her tenure, she has worked tirelessly to further develop programs at both Home Again and Renewed Hope with the focus on equipping families and individuals with employment paths, educational opportunities, and critical life skills. She has developed deep connections in the community, creating partnerships with businesses, organizations, houses of worship, and elected offices to recruit support for services to the men, women, and children they serve.

Evelyn Hernandez

Evelyn is a Program Manager for Homeless Healthcare Los Angeles, where she coordinates homeless outreach locations, outreach work in the field and provides harm reduction, trauma-informed care, behavioral health services, housing navigation, and much more. Born and raised in Koreatown, Evelyn faced many housing challenges growing up. Influenced and inspired by her own circumstances, she vowed to use her experiences to help others and make a difference in the lives of the unhoused community. Evelyn works throughout the city and has had a profound impact on CD13 neighborhoods, including Echo Park, Silver Lake, and Rampart Village.



COUNCIL DISTRICT 13
HONOREE

Aracelly Cauich



COUNCIL DISTRICT 14
HONOREE

Aracelly is the CEO of Hummingbird Hope LA, a nonprofit in Boyle Heights that started during the pandemic. Aracelly's mission is to provide a safe space for the Boyle Heights community to receive resources, such as water, homemade food, clothing and hygiene products. What started as services to offer food and water has transformed into a hub for mental health resources, substance abuse, and vaccine information. Aracelly continues to be a pillar in the community for both housed and unhoused residents.

Shannon Murray



COUNCIL DISTRICT 15
HONOREE

Shannon is currently an Adjunct Lecturer at the UCLA Luskin School of Social Welfare, and a founding member and the Treasurer of the Board of Directors for the Sanctuary of Hope, providing services and housing to homeless and at-risk 18 to 24-year-olds. Shannon found her passion and inspiration by working with the homeless community when she was an intern in 1995, working in Skid Row for almost 15 years before coming to the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) in 2011. She specializes in program development and operations, community organizing, policy advocacy, grant writing, permanent supportive housing, and the Housing First/Harm Reduction philosophy.

FEATURE:

LAS FOTOS PROJECT



Las Fotos Project's mission is to elevate the voices of teenage girls & gender-expansive youth from communities of color through photography and mentoring, empowering them to channel their creativity for the benefit of themselves, their community, and future careers.

FEATURE:

HEIRLOOM



Heirloom LA firmly believes everyone has the right to eat healthy, and is committed to making this a reality. They proudly support small, local organic farms and work tirelessly to educate and improve the community's welfare. Additionally, they have partnered with Would Works, a nonprofit social enterprise that trains and employs people experiencing homelessness in woodworking and services. Even during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Heirloom LA delivered hundreds of meals to families facing food insecurity, demonstrating their unwavering dedication to their mission.

FEATURE:

MARIACHI DIVAS



The Mariachi Divas de Cindy Shea is an all-female mariachi band based in Los Angeles, California. In 2009, they became the first all-female mariachi band ever to be nominated for a Grammy Award, and the first to win one.



LA Civil Rights

LACSW



CITY OF LOS ANGELES COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN



201 N. Los Angeles St., Suite 6
Los Angeles, CA, 90012



213-978-1845



civilandhumanrights.lacity.gov