



Meet the 23rd Annual Women Who Make A Difference Honorees

Jeannett Slesnick (1974-2023)

Jeannett's most recent honor was the announcement of her induction as a member of Florida Blue Key (the University of Florida's highest leadership recognition).

Here are a few of her commitments, accomplishments and recognitions during her 51- years of adult life in Miami-Dade County:

- Served on the Coral Gables City Commission 20L5 - 2A17 before voluntarily resigning to "run" for Mayor.
- Served as President of the Junior Orange Bowl Committee (1989 - 1990).
- Served as Chairperson of the Coral Gables Community Foundation (2008).
- During her tour-of-duty she created an incredibly important program which supplied needed services for seniors enabling them to age in place ("Gables at Home").
- Served as the Founding Secretary on the Board of the Coral Gables Museum.
- Served as President of the Gables Good Government Committee.
- During her service as an active member of the Junior League of Miami she was previously honored once as the "Volunteer of the Year" and once as the "Sustainer of the Year".
- Served as Vice-Chair of the City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board and as a member of the City's Economic Development Board.
- Served as President of the Coral Gables High School PTA.
- Served on the Board of the Actors Playhouse at the Miracle Theater.
- Served as Honorary Chair for the Relay for Life (20L6).
- Served as the Senior Warden of St. Philip's Episcopal Church.
- Most recently served on the Boards of the Coral Gables Garden Club and the Cotillion Club.
- Some of the awards that she received are: "Athena Award Finalist" (2000); "George E. Merrick Award of Excellence - Distinguished Honoree" -Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce (2009); "Margaret Weedman Elder Advocate Award" -Alliance for Aging (2010); "Legacy Award" - Coral Gables Community Foundation (2010); "Lifetime Achievement Award" - Catalyst Miami QAIJ-); "Rosalind Ludwig Chairman Award" - Red Cross Spectrum Awards for Women (201-3); and "Salute to Miami Leaders Award"- Leadership Miami (201-6).
- Selected as the Rotary Club of Coral Gables' "Citizen of the Year - 2022" .
- The Coral Gables City Commission declared July 11, 2023, as "Jeannett Slesnick Day".

- She was the founder and the Publisher of a quarterly local news magazine "Jeannett's Journal" which was distributed to approximately 18,000 households both in printed digital formats. Lest anyone should think that public service and publishing occupy all of Jeannett's somewhat boundless energies, she was a successful entrepreneur as the Senior Partner of her own real estate brokerage, Slesnick & Jochem. She was ranked as the top Coral Gables Realtor for "listings" throughout the past 15 years.
- Her partnership with her husband, Don, was of significance and should be noted. Her role in supporting his efforts was through extremely active involvement and participation in every possible way. Jeannett was at his side in every office he held. She spent ten years of dedicated service to the citizens of Coral Gables as an active and involved "First Lady"; the "First Lady" of the American Bar Association's Labor & Employment Section (15,000 +/- members); the "First Lady" of the Orange Bowl Committee; and the "First Lady" of both the Dade Heritage Trust and the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. Please note that the word "served" is purposely and extensively used in this short biography in that Jeannett was a true "servant Leader".

Andria Dickinson

Andria spent her career in the nonprofit arena beginning in higher education which included both student affairs/residence life and recruitment. As Assistant Dean of Students, Andria oversaw the residence life staff and promoted student development. Following student affairs, Andria worked in the Office of Admission at an all-woman's college and then for 10 years at The University of Miami.

Continuing with nonprofits, Andria spent five years as the Executive Director of the Coral Gables Community Foundation before becoming the Vice President of Development at Camillus House, the largest service provider for homeless individuals in Miami.

Andria holds a master's degree from the University of Miami. Community involvement has included the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, Beaux Art, and the Junior League of Miami where she was President in 2005-2006.

Now retired, Andria enjoys time with her family, tennis, spades, travel, and fine wine. Andria has two daughters, Katie, and Kelly, and four children and ten grandchildren through her marriage to Bob Dickinson.

Remy Gordon

Remy's journey into the realm of social work and philanthropy began at a young age when she started volunteering at a local Soup Kitchen in an underserved neighborhood. Her early exposure to the challenges faced by those in need sparked a flame of passion within her, a flame that would burn brightly throughout her life.

After completing her undergraduate studies, Remy chose to channel her passion for education and children by becoming an elementary school teacher. However, her desire to make a more

direct impact on the lives of those facing adversity led her to take a break from teaching and delve into the world of social services. As a Program Coordinator at a trauma-informed homeless shelter for women and children, Remy found her calling.

During her time at the shelter, Remy developed a deep connection with the guests and realized the profound impact she could make in the lives of those experiencing homelessness. This realization prompted her to return to school to pursue a Masters in Social Work. Her dedication and commitment to understanding the complexities of homelessness led her to complete her Foundation Practicum at a homeless shelter for youth.

Remy's passion for helping the homeless population intensified as she conducted extensive research on the subject. However, it was a chance encounter during a routine grocery shopping trip that served as the catalyst for her most significant endeavor - the creation of Seeking Shelter. A young mother, desperate and with nowhere to go, approached Remy, seeking assistance. This encounter ignited the spark for the creation of Seeking Shelter, an initiative born out of the need for a more accessible method for individuals to find available shelters.

As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and therapist, Remy's career has been marked by a diverse range of experiences, including working in schools, in-home therapy, assertive community treatment teams, psychiatric units, and private practice. Her love for therapy and her innate ability to connect with people have been constants throughout her professional journey.

The creation of Seeking Shelter Inc., a 501c3 nonprofit, exemplifies Remy's commitment to addressing homelessness on a broader scale. The nonprofit includes a free app, Seeking Shelter, developed in collaboration with software developers, providing a comprehensive database of resources for individuals experiencing homelessness. Remy also engages in hands-on outreach in various communities, offering not just material assistance but also emotional support and a listening ear.

Remy's long-term goal is to establish Charlie's House, a wraparound shelter program for transition-aged youth (16-24 years old). Her tenacity is evident in her continuous efforts to secure funding and donations to support her mission. Despite the challenges, Remy remains steadfast, driven by the belief that everyone deserves a chance at a better life.

In her unrelenting pursuit of excellence and a deeper understanding of how to best serve the vulnerable populations she is passionate about, Remy Gordon recently returned to school to embark on a doctoral journey in social work. Her current research focuses on identifying and developing appropriate mental health services tailored to the unique needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, showcasing her commitment to advancing the field and ensuring holistic support for those in crisis.

Remy Gordon's story is one of dedication, compassion, and an unyielding commitment to making the world a better place. She refuses to be an average bystander, instead choosing to seek out those in need, amplify their voices, and tirelessly work towards ending the stigma associated with homelessness. Remy's legacy is not just one of personal success but a testament to the

transformative power of compassion and the profound impact one individual can have on the lives of many.

Michelle Shirley

As CEO of Be Strong International, Michelle is dedicated to teaching youth and adults the importance of Heart Skills™ through healthy relationship education. She began her career at Be Strong International in 2005, and worked up from office and program manager to CEO. Since taking on the role in 2012, Michelle has grown BSI's annual operating budget exponentially and increased its programmatic impact. Michelle coined the educational concept of Heart Skills™, as an essential educational tool that supports the transformation for individuals from brokenness to wholeness. Affectionately known as the Chief Heart Officer, she is a frontline leader in the community, a champion for optimal workplace culture and a mentor.