

10 role models recognized during Women's History Month

Carson City Chamber of Commerce

As Women's History Month comes to an end, the Carson City Chamber Board of Directors announces the recognition of 10 exceptional women who have been – and will continue to be – important in the history of this city.

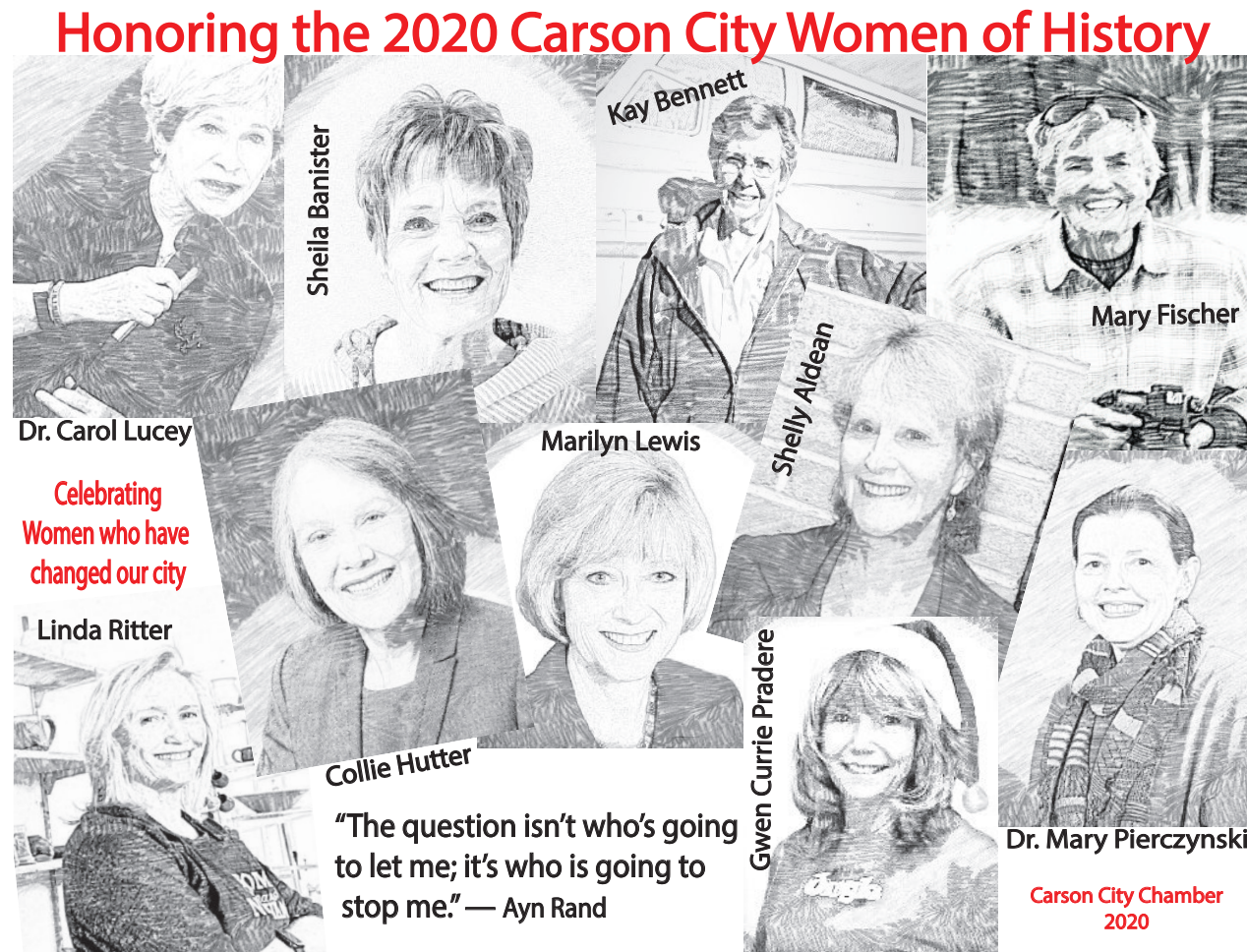
Chairman of the Board Lisa Lee states, "Some of these amazing women are recognized for breaking through the "glass ceiling" while others for their public service and good works. Some are fully retired, while others remain involved from a distance, but all have been influential in their time and remain role models for young women as they begin their careers." These successful women pursued their education and careers against all odds in a time when women were encouraged to be wives and mothers.

The women were to be publicly recognized at a luncheon on Thursday; however, due to the continued need for social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was canceled.

Shelly Aldean: believes strongly in community service whether in the public or non-profit sector. She served as Carson City Supervisor from 2003-2013 and continues to represent Carson City on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing board. A resident since 1989, she became active in the community serving as president of Carson City Mainstreet from 1990-1993, the Carson City Chamber from 1994-1995, and is past chair of the WNC Foundation Board and a member emeritus of UNR Reno Foundation Board of Trustees. She co-founded Capital City C.I.R.C.L.E.S and is currently the chair of the newly founded ROADS workgroup to transition the underemployed from low paying jobs to a meaningful career. She has been recognized by multiple organizations for her efforts including the Governor's Points of Light Award in 2016 for her work on Capital City C.I.R.C.L.E.S. She states, "I was raised by parents who stressed the importance of community service." She currently serves as the president of Glenbrook Company and vice president of Eden Managements.

Sheila Banister: was born and raised in Carson City, graduating from Carson High in 1974 and UNR in 1978 with a bachelor's degree in Social Services and Corrections. Passionate about our troubled youth, she became a youth counselor at the Murphy-Bernardini Regional Juvenile Detention Center in 1979 working her

way up to break the glass ceiling by becoming the first female Chief of Juvenile Services in 2001. She followed in the footsteps of her father Dan Murphy who was Chief and instrumental in conceptualizing the center. Serving troubled youth is a family affair. Her daughter Ali Banister took over as Chief in 2017. She states, "I am so proud of my daughter, Ali, who is now the third generation to hold this title." She is now retired.



Celebrating Women who have changed our city

"The question isn't who's going to let me; it's who is going to stop me." — Ayn Rand

Carson City Chamber 2020

Kay Bennett: was the first woman to win in a Carson City primary election against four males in the 1987 election for a seat on the Carson City Board of Supervisors representing Ward 4, a seat she held for 12 years. She served on almost every city committee during an especially bleak economic time in Carson's history and was instrumental in creating the Carson River Advisory Committee, today named the Carson River Subconser-vancy, a multi-county agency with the mission to protect the Carson River. She also served on the Tahoe Regional Planning Association. A 13-year career nurse, she arrived in our city in 1985 to become Director of Surgery for Carson Tahoe Hospital. She is a licensed pilot and with her now deceased husband, Hale, developed and still manages Silver Springs Airport. She states, "When I was 35, I asked myself what do I want to say about myself when I am 50 or 60?" The answer is clear.

Mary Fischer: has served the community in many ways since her arrival to the city in 1962. She is best

known for spearheading the art and landscaping project now along I-580 Carson City bypass. In 1997, she and other Master Gardeners founded Gardeners Reclaiming Our Wayside (GROW) as the grassroots movement to bring landscaping and art to otherwise barren freeway projects. It took 14 years working with city, state, and federal agencies to secure funding for the art project centering on Carson's history for which she and the group have received various awards including the 2000 Congressional Certificate of Achievement, the city's 2002 Community Service Award, and many more. As a result of the efforts, GROW and NDOT received a federal grant to landscape the first phase of the Carson City Freeway that has now become standard for all freeway projects. While she is proud of this accomplishment, she states, "My proudest moments were to serve as the leader of Girl Scout Troop 264." She and her husband own and operate Cottonwood Mobile Home Park.

Collie Hutter: is co-founder of one of Carson City's top manufacturers and has served as Click Bond's CFO/COO and President in a world where manufacturing is thought of as mostly male dominated. As a member of the Manufacturing Institute's STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering and Production) Ahead program, she was presented the inaugural award for women in excellence in manufacturing. She received a BS in Physics from Carnegie-Mellon

University and an MBA from the prestigious Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. She and husband Charles have grown the aerospace company from 5 employees in 1987 to over 400 in three locations including Wales UK. She has been an active community member serving on many high powered boards including the Nevada Manufacturers Association and the National Association of Manufacturers. She has worked tirelessly to increase the visibility of manufacturing as a career path. She states, "I founded and am past chair of Dream It, Do It Nevada, the employer workforce initiative, to show that careers in manufacturing are great careers."

Marilyn Lewis: has always been a champion for her community and when Carson City was at its lowest and darkest point, she was instrumental in spearheading "Christmas at the Capital," today known as the Silver & Snowflakes Festival of Lights attracting thousands to the downtown core. A resident since 1972, she graduated from UNR with a B.S. in Managerial Science. While a mother of two young daughters, she became a State Farm agent in 1982. She advanced quickly in the then male-dominated insurance industry earning a place in the Lifetime Member State President's Club and has been granted about every level of recognition State Farm offers its agents. As a civic leader, she serves on the board of Capital City C.I.R.C.L.E.S and was past president of Soroptimist

International. She is recognized as a leader among her peers and is in high demand as a speaker at industry events, stating one of her pleasures is "to mentor other women who have chosen careers with State Farm."

Dr. Carol Lucey: broke the glass ceiling at Western Nevada College by being the first woman to hold the title of president from 1999-2014, and there hasn't been a woman appointed since. Prior to arriving in Carson City, she was a research physicist, a college physics/engineering professor, and a college administrator in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. Now retired, she serves as a volunteer lobbyist for the community colleges, is an ESL instructor, and states, "I now enjoy entertaining as a vocalist at various assisted living communities singing tunes from the Great American Songbook."

Dr. Mary Pierczynski: broke the glass ceiling by being named the first female to serve as Carson City Superintendent of Schools, a post she held for six years between 2002 and 2008. She served the school district since 1987 starting as a counselor. She was recognized as Superintendent of the Year three times by the Nevada Association of School Boards and has received many distinguished educational awards throughout her teaching career. She received her doctorate in Educational Leadership from UNR in 1994. An active member of the Carson City community, Mary believes in

volunteerism and continues to serve on a number of non-profit boards. She served 21 years as a board member for the Boys & Girls Club of Western Nevada and was president of the Carson City Rotary in 2013. She is a licensed pilot. She states, "I so believe in a good education for our children and, today, serve as a lobbyist specializing in education."

Gwen Pradere: has a soft heart for the area's low-income seniors. As founder and executive director of the non-profit Friends to All, she and her army of volunteer Santa's and elves "touch hearts with a visit." In 1999, after working with Santa Ray Smith to bring cheer to the elderly residents of a nursing home, she began the annual movement to bring joy to over 200 seniors by organizing over 50 volunteers to visit homes. A resident since 1994, Gwen served on the organizing board of the Downtown Carson City Business District and the Board of Trustees of the Northern Nevada Railway Foundation. Expanding her reach, she states, "My vision of the future is to bring friendship, joy, and support to our seniors throughout the year as well as during the Christmas holiday season."

Linda Ritter: is a native Nevadan and the first woman to serve as Carson City Manager opening the door for other women to be considered. It is through her breaking of that glass ceiling that we now have two females serving as City Manager and Deputy City Manager. She also was the first female city manager of Elko, NV before moving to Carson City in 2003. She was recognized as Volunteer of the Year by the Carson City Chamber in 2019 because of her skills in kicking off the Chamber's Leadership Institute. She currently operates her own consulting business and works with governmental agencies to assist with strategic planning and performance management. Pottery art she says, "has become her passion" now that she has more time to devote to creative endeavors.

"We want to acknowledge, thank, and celebrate these exceptional women while they are still alive, for too often we only celebrate the accomplishments of those who have gone before us," said Chamber Executive Director Ronni Hannaman.

She added that the biographies shown represent only a small glimpse into the incredible lives, education, and careers of these ten talented women who make up the fabric of who we are today.

Women's History Month is celebrated each March.