

## *Message from our President*

Dear Members and Friends of SCCW,

As we begin to close out 2020, we find ourselves in the strange dichotomy of emotions – for this truly is a moment to celebrate and a moment to grieve. We just elected our first female vice president. A Black Woman. An Indian Woman. An Asian Woman. An American Woman.

On November 7<sup>th</sup>, Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris shattered the highest glass ceiling and across the nation sisters danced in the streets. 100 years after our first vote, we will finally see a woman co-lead this country. This is something to toast.

Yet, the impulse to celebrate feels strange and muted. This landmark election occurred against the backdrop of the grim reality that our country is sick, both physically and spiritually. A biological Pandora continues to ravage our communities, exacerbates racial disparities, and threatens the health and financial security of our most vulnerable populations. In Stanislaus County alone, COVID-19 has taken the lives of over 400 residents and resulted in the loss of 40,000 jobs. This is something to mourn.

We also sense on a spiritual level, that something sacred about being an American has been lost. The tension between individual freedom and collective responsibility battles on, but we lack the skills to have a meaningful conversation about what this means in practice. The simple act of wearing a mask has somehow become a symbol of our political stance, rather than an individual sacrifice to safeguard the health of our neighbors. This is worrisome.

*Continued on page 3*



Mission Statement:  
Stanislaus County Commission for Women is committed to supporting a coordinated effort by concerned groups and individuals in Stanislaus County to more develop fully the potential of all women.

We support:

- Pro-Choice and reproductive Rights
- Gender pay equity
- Adequate funding for women and children's health issues and research
- Ending violence against women
- Adequate, safe and affordable child care and other child care issues
- Anti-discrimination based on sexual orientation

[www.stanislauswomen.net](http://www.stanislauswomen.net)

## Outstanding Women Event - March 20, 2021

Due to COVID-19, the SCCW Board will present the Outstanding Women of 2021 to the community via a virtual event, using live interviews and video to showcase the honorees and their work in Stanislaus County. Watch our website and Spring edition of this newsletter for participation details.

Do you know we have honored hundreds of women during our 40-year history? Please meet a few of them by reading the brief biographies below.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Kay Black (1904-1988), 1989 Woman of History**

Kathleen E. "Kay" Black was a writer, editor, organizer, volunteer, activist. A Seneca Indian woman who always wanted to help the underdog, and her life was spent accomplishing this goal. She spent her life assisting Indians, women, labor organizations, students or anyone who needed another voice. She was a founder of the Modesto League of Women voters and the California Indian Education Association, significant in the later establishment of the Indian university near Davis. She was a member of several organizations, including the American Indian Press Association, the American Newspaper Writers Guild and the American Association of University Women. Always active and always with a cause, she sensed and interpreted inequities, discrimination or need for changes, and tireless in her pursuit to make amends and strive for historical accuracy.

### **Dottie Stevens, 2001 Outstanding Woman**

Dottie Stevens was one of six volunteers who formed the Stanislaus Medical Center's first auxiliary in 1965, currently serving her sixth term as president. She was selected as Stanislaus County employee of the year in 1972 and also has received the Agnes Dix Award from the California Nurses Association. She is active with Townsend Opera Players, the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society and Friends Outside.

### **Ruhi Sheikh, 2016 Outstanding Woman**

Ruhi Sheikh moved to Modesto 10 years ago. Along with raising a young family and spearheading efforts in the past as president of Fremont Open Plan parent group, she has been instrumental in bringing arts and culture to the region. With her husband, former Modesto Poet Laureate Sam Pierstoff, Ruhi has coordinated the annual ILL List Poetry Slam. The event showcases local and regional emerging artists through spoken word competition and has sold out every year. As one of three organizers of the annual MOD Shop, which features local artisans and crafts people on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, she has helped turn downtown Modesto into a shopping destination.

**Do you have someone to nominate for our 42<sup>nd</sup> year?**

**Find the nomination form that appears on page 4 of this newsletter and also on our website.**

**Don't delay; the due date is January 15, 2021.**

**President's Message, continued:**

The path forward begins with each of us acknowledging that we have more work to do. Voting is not enough. We must continue to engage in civic dialogue, volunteer our time to efforts that elevate our community, and create space for diverse voices to lead.

On a hopeful note, regardless of the myriad challenges of 2020, many local women and young women have stepped up to nurse our sick, teach our children, and protect our marginalized communities. Help us honor these incredible heroes by nominating them for 2021 Outstanding Women of the Year. We included the nomination form in this newsletter, but you can also access it online and review past recipients on our website. Please submit nominations by January 15, 2021.

Sincerely,

**Amanda Hughes, SCCW President**

**Victory Speech of Vice President-Elect, Kamala Harris, November 7, 2020**

*And to the woman most responsible for my presence here today — my mother, Shyamala Gopalan Harris, who is always in our hearts. When she came here from India at the age of 19, she maybe didn't quite imagine this moment. But she believed so deeply in an America where a moment like this is possible. So, I'm thinking about her and about the generations of women — Black women. Asian, White, Latina, and Native American women throughout our nation's history who have paved the way for this moment tonight. Women who fought and sacrificed so much for equality, liberty, and justice for all, including the Black women, who are too often overlooked, but so often prove that they are the backbone of our democracy. All the women who worked to secure and protect the right to vote for over a century: 100 years ago with the 19th Amendment, 55 years ago with the Voting Rights Act, and now, in 2020, with a new generation of women in our country who cast their ballots and continued the fight for their fundamental right to vote and be heard. Tonight, I reflect on their struggle, their determination and the strength of their vision — to see what can be unburdened by what has been — I stand on their shoulders.*

**42nd Annual Awards  
2021 Outstanding Women Awards  
Saturday, March 20, 2021**

**NOMINATION FORM**

- Outstanding Woman**
- Outstanding Young Woman** (Must be a graduating high school senior or current post-secondary student. Age 24 or younger)
- Woman of History** (Posthumous Honor)
- Woman Living Pioneer** (Achievements pre-dated SCCW)

*Nominations must be mailed (postmarked no later than January 15, 2021) or emailed to [SCCforWomen@gmail.com](mailto:SCCforWomen@gmail.com) arriving by January 15, 2021.*

**Nominee Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (night) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (Young Woman only) \_\_\_\_\_

School (Young Woman only) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of death (Woman of History only) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Resident of Stanislaus County for 3+ years  Yes  No

**Nominator's Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (night) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_



**Purpose of Annual Awards**

*The purpose of the Annual Outstanding Women Awards is to honor women who have demonstrated exemplary service to our community as it relates to the objectives of the Stanislaus County Commission for Women.*

**Objectives**

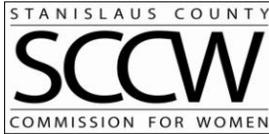
- *To promote issues that concern women of all ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, economic backgrounds and beliefs.*
- *To promote within women the knowledge of their strengths and resources and to support women in the pursuit of their individual choices.*
- *To validate and celebrate the achievements of women collectively and individually throughout Stanislaus County.*
- *To support legislation and programs that address the needs of all women and children.*

A sample nomination, "**Tips for Submitting a Successful Nomination**" and a **list of prior award recipients** are available at [www.StanislausWomen.net](http://www.StanislausWomen.net)

On separate paper, please respond to the following questions and include it with this cover form. Please limit responses to no more than two (2) pages. Do not submit curriculum vitae in lieu of the requested form and response, however you may include as an addendum.

- A. Describe how this nominee has demonstrated exceptional involvement in activities focused on a concern for women in the Stanislaus County community. These may include but are not limited to working with community organizations; leadership roles in activities; self directed endeavors, advocacy or policy making. Outstanding Young Women should be nominated for demonstrating exceptional leadership, extra-curricular activities that positively impact girls and women, overcoming hardship to inspire others and other actions and qualities that make her exceptional.
- B. List any Degrees, Certificates, Awards or Honors the Nominee has received related to her work on behalf of women and children.
- C. Provide other pertinent information validating the nominee's qualifications for this honor.

SCCW • PO Box 4254 • Modesto CA 95352 • More info email: [SCCforWomen@gmail.com](mailto:SCCforWomen@gmail.com) or call Jessica Self 805.501.8211 • [www.StanislausWomen.net](http://www.StanislausWomen.net)



## **Board Members for 2020 - 2021**

**President** – Amanda Hughes

**Vice President Community Relations** – Gillian Wegener

**Vice President Program** – Jessica Self

**Vice President Membership** – Ruhi Sheikh

**Immediate Past President** – Jennie Sweeney

**Treasurer** – Theresa Spezzano

**Secretary** – Nancy Fisher

**Newsletter Editor** – Jane Manley

**Members at Large** – Stella Beratlis, Erin Black, Karina Juaregui,  
Jenny Tang

**Ad Hoc Membership & Tech Assistance** - Yashlee Nazi

**Stanislaus County Commission for Women**

PO Box 4254

Modesto, CA 95352-4254

Return Service Requested

***In this issue:  
2021 Outstanding Women  
Nominations and Event***