



Michigan Women Forward is proud to add six inductees to the HERstory Women’s Hall of Fame on November 7th at a celebration at Detroit’s TCF Center (formerly Cobo Center). Three contemporary and three historical women were selected via two rounds of statewide judging:

The contemporary women inductees include Public Health Advocate **Vernice Davis-Anthony, BSN, MPH**, InsideOut Literary Arts Founder and Executive Director **Terry Blackhawk, Ph.D.** and Michigan League for Public Policy President and CEO **Gilda Jacobs.** In the historical category, the Hall of Fame is recognizing **Martha Baldwin,** founder of the Ladies Literary Society that created the Birmingham Public Library, **Margaret Kirchner Stevenson**, one of the first Women’s Air Force Service (WASP) pilotsandWayne County’s first female black judge **Lucile Watts.** The women join 323 other Hall of Fame inductees.

“These women exemplify strength, a commitment to doing great things for their communities and the state. They often did so under very difficult circumstances,” said MWF President and CEO Carolyn Cassin. “The women of Michigan need to stand with them and be proud of the accomplishments.”

Established in 1983, the Women’s Hall of Fame is located in downtown Lansing and is open for tours, meetings and special events by appointment. For a complete list of inductees since its founding in 1983, visit <http://www.miwf.org>.

Tickets to the dinner are $175 per person, which includes a strolling supper and the induction ceremony. They can be purchased at [www.miwf.org](http://www.michiganwomen.org/awards_dinner.aspx).

MWF was founded in 1986 by 20 extraordinary visionaries who conceived of an organization that would encourage women to play an active role in philanthropy and governance. Its mission is to transform Michigan to achieve equality and empowerment for women and girls. For more information, visit [www.miwf.org](http://www.miwf.org).

**BIOS OF 2019 WOMEN’S HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES**

Contemporary Winners

**Vernice Davis Anthony, BSN, MPH**

Throughout the span of her 50-year career, Vernice has made compelling achievements in sectors such as health care and government. She served as a health officer at three levels of government — city, county and state — including as CEO of Greater Detroit Health Council. As public officer for the City of Detroit, Vernice directed the return of the City Health Department from a nonprofit back into city government as required by the city charter. At Wayne County, she worked with state and local legislators to redesign indigent care funding and provided leadership to increase access to quality health care for un- and underinsured individuals.

**Terry Blackhawk, Ph.D.**

Born in California, Dr. Terry Blackhawk received her Ph.D. in Reading and Language Arts from Oakland University. The university awarded her an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities in 2014. Perhaps Dr. Blackhawk’s greatest professional and social milestone is as founder and executive director of InsideOut Literary Arts Project (iO), which is a 501-3 nonprofit. This organization started off as a grassroots movement dedicated to serving the needs of children in the Detroit Public School system. An expansion of this project, Citywide Poets has received a President’s Committee for the Arts and Humanities award at the White House in 2009.

**Gilda Z. Jacobs**

After receiving both her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from the University of Michigan, Jacobs worked with the special needs children from the Madison Heights School District from 1971 to 1975. In legislature, she fought for sufficient funding for special education. Gilda became the first woman elected to Huntington Woods City Commission, serving from 1981-1994. She served in the Michigan Senate from 2003-2010, where she was elected as Chair of the Democratic Senate Caucus. Since her departure from Senate, Gilda has assumed the roles of both President and CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy, directing both policy-oriented research and advocacy work.

Historical Winners

**Martha Baldwin (Aug 22, 1840-May 30, 1913)**

Martha Baldwin established the first library association in the Good Templars Lodge in 1869. Some three years later, the State of Michigan gave recognition to Baldwin’s association. Martha also worked in education, with a 26-year tenure in the Detroit Public School system, as principal at Norvell School. All of her adult life, Baldwin served as a fierce proponent of women’s suffrage, serving the both the Village and Pontiac Women’s Club and Michigan Equal Suffrage Association (MESA). She held many positions at MESA before retiring due to illness in 1911, and recovered long enough to start one last organization in 1912 – The Oakland County Equal Suffrage Association.

**Margaret Kirchner Stevenson (Sept 12, 1920-July 12, 1998)**

At 22 years of age, Margaret was accepted into Class 43-W-6 of the Women’s Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) in 1943 and became one of the first women in US history to fly military aircraft. Her accomplishments helped set the stage for thousands of military women aviators by challenging the attitudes and restrictions of her era. Margaret was able to serve her country with distinction and honor. She also had an admirable education career for the Saginaw School District, spanning over 30 years as teacher, reading specialist, and principal of five schools. In 2010, she was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal at the US Capitol.

**Lucile Watts (Nov 9, 1920-June 22, 2018)**

A Virginia native, Lucile attended law school and was the only woman in her class to complete the program. After graduating from Detroit College of Law in 1962, she went on to open her own law firm. During the 1967 Detroit rebellion, Watts rose to the occasion and became defense counsel for black men who were wrongfully taken into custody. In 1980, she was elected judge to the Third Circuit Court making her the first black, female judge not only for that bench but for all of Michigan. In May of 2018, Wolverine Bar Association President Jehan Crump recognized Judge Lucile Watts’ impact and achievements in her Michigan Bar Journal article titled, “*A Tribute to First: Black Female Lawyers in Michigan.”*.