

# Berkshire BPW



Berkshire Business  
and Professional  
Women

*Honors*

*Gwendolyn VanSant*



*Woman of Achievement*

**2019 - 2020**

*For her outstanding leadership,  
creative energy and  
numerous contributions*

**May 6, 2019**

## *Criteria on nominating a Woman of Achievement (WOA)*

Each year the Berkshire Business and Professional Woman accepts nominations for the annual “Woman of Achievement” award. This award honors a Berkshire County Woman for her considerable achievements and outstanding commitment to the Berkshire County Community.

Proceeds from tonight’s dinner will go towards the Career Advancement Scholarships that Berkshire Business & Professional Women awards each year. Berkshire BPW was able to grant scholarships to twelve eligible applicants totaling \$12,000 this past September 2018.

*Berkshire Business and Professional Women would like to thank our local businesses who continue to support our program each year, the committee and all who help make this annual event so successful.*

## 2019 Woman of Achievement Celebration Agenda

### Welcome

*Claire Richards*  
*Berkshire BPW President*

### BCEC and Scholarships

*June Roy-Martin*

### Dinner

### Introduction of Master of Ceremonies

*Gillette Conner*

### Master of Ceremony

*Sam VanSant*

### Speakers:

Andrea Harrington *District Attorney*

Bob Norris *BRIDGE Co-Founder*

Vanessa LeGrande *BRIDGE Volunteer*

Stephanie Wright, M.ED. *BRIDGE Master Trainer*

Megha Buttenheim *CiPP Wholebeing at Kripalu Cohort Leader*

Suzanne McDowell *King Arthur Flour, CiPP ASPIRE Cohort*

Lex Schroeder *Changemaker Strategies Editorial Lead*

Ty Jackson *Big Head Books*

Gabriela Cruz *Women to Women*

AJ Enchill *Bridge Board*

John Bissell *Greylock Federal Credit Union CEO*

### Video (in order of appearance):

JV Hampton-VanSant *Gwendolyn's Son*

Yeou Cheng Ma *Sister of Yo-Yo Ma, Children's Orchestra Society*

Natalie Shiras *former Pastor on the Hill, BRIDGE volunteer*

## 2019 Woman of Achievement Celebration Agenda cont.

### Video (in order of appearance) cont.:

Dr. Peggy McIntosh	<i>National Thought Leader White Privilege, Wellesley Center for Women</i>
Tracey Benson	<i>Former Principal of Pittsfield High School</i>
Natalie Hoerner	<i>CiPP Whole Being at Kripalu Cohort</i>
Suzanne McDowell	<i>CiPP Wholebeing at Kripalu Cohort, King Arthur Flour Executive</i>
Laurie Curtis	<i>CiPP Wholebeing at Kripalu Cohort</i>
DR. Maria Sirois	<i>CiPP Wholebeing at Kripalu Cohort Leader</i>
Paige Collins	<i>CiPP Wholebeing at Kripalu Cohort</i>
Elizabeth Burger	<i>CiPP Wholebeing at Kripalu Cohort</i>
Kristen Van Ginhoven	<i>WAM Founder and Executive Director</i>

**Presentation of Citation** *BBPW President Claire Richards  
State Rep Tricia Farley-Bowvier*

**Award Presentation** *June Roy-Martin*

**Recipient's Remarks** *Gwendolyn VanSant*

**Closing Remarks** *Sharon Connors*

### ***Woman of Achievement Committee***

Gillette Conner and Barbara Martin Co-Chairs  
Sharon Connors, June Roy-Martin, Sopheap Nhim,  
Joyce Boivin, Gaye Weinberger, and Andrea Hurley

*Thank you all for coming tonight to celebrate with Gwendolyn and to support Berkshire Business & Professional Women's education programs.*

## ***BBPW Woman of Achievement Recipients***

Patricia C. Begrowicz	2017/2018
Kristine Hazzard	2016/2017
Lucy Prashker	2015/2016
Beth Mitchell	2014/2015
Dr. Ellen Kennedy	2013/2014
Gail Molari	2012/2013
Marilyn Sperling	2011/2012
Ruth Blodgett	2010/2011
Denise Marshall	2009/2010
June Roy-Martin	2008/2009
Christine Singer	2007/2008
Robin McPherson	2006/2007
Pam Malumphy	2005/2006
Laurie Norton Moffatt	2004/2005
Eugenie Sills	2003/2004
Anne W. Pasko	2002/2003
The Berkshire BPW Membership	2001/2002
Dr. Barbara Viniar	2000/2001
Sharon Blume	1999/2000
Tina Packer	1998/1999
Emma M. Kennedy	1997/1998
Mary V. Flynn	1996/1997
P. Keyburn Hollister	1995/1996
Jane Fitzpatrick	1994/1995
Lee Leahy Stanfield	1993/1994
Mary K. O'Brien	1992/1993
Ella V. Dicenzo	1991/1992
Beverly A. Chartier	1990/1991
Sylvia Stein & Lilla G. Weinberger	1989/1990
Gilda H. Palano	1988/1989
Esther L. Quinn	1987/1988
Mary Conroy	1986/1987
Anne Everett Wojtkowski	1985/1986

Mary Ellen Ausman	1984/1985
Clara Claiborne Park	1983/1984
Amy Bess Miller	1982/1983
Marilyn Anne Kelly	1981/1982
Ruth Bass & Joan Roge	1980/1981
Betty Dennis	1979/1980
Elizabeth Watt & Mildred Yeats	1978/1979
Elizabeth "Sue" Guyette	1977/1978
Ann Fitzpatrick Brown	1976/1977
May Hitchcock	1975/1976
Dorothy Bejtlich	1974/1975
Diane Jackman	1973/1974
Bertha Clark	1972/1973
Carol Lively	1971/1972
Evette Giftos & Rita L' Heureux	1970/1971
Helen H. Johnson	1969/1970
Sally Willeke	1968/1969
Julie Parker	1967/1968
Gladys Brigham	1966/1967
Astrid Hagenguth	1965/1966

### **BBPW Board Members**

Claire Richards	President
Shela Hidalgo	Vice President Programming
Sopheap Nhim	Vice President Programming
Donna Collins	Vice President Membership
Gaye Weinberger	Treasurer
Gillette Conner	Secretary



Gwendolyn VanSant is an experienced organizational change consultant and coach who works at the intersection of diversity leadership, equity and inclusion, and strategic planning. She is the Founding Director of BRIDGE and the Equity and Inclusion Team Lead at Changemaker Strategies (formerly Imagine Philanthropy). She has founded several initiatives based in the principles of equity and justice, the inherent dignity and worth of individuals, and our interconnected web of humanity. She serves as the Vice Chair of the Town of Great

Barrington W. E. B. Du Bois Legacy Committee, and she's on the board of the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts and UU Mass Action Network. A skilled community organizer, Gwendolyn is also a well-recognized thought leader on gender equity, racial justice, and reparations.

Gwendolyn offers highly customizable cultural competency, multicultural education, and literacy and proficiency training programs for groups of all ages and professional, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds. She works with corporations and financial institutions, secondary and higher education institutions, law enforcement, public health institutions and hospitals, arts organizations, and leadership institutes. Her cultural competency training, strategic work, and capacity building consulting work has been sought out across the country. New programs she's developed include Workplace Spanish for Law Enforcement, the first Women of Color in the Workplace Retreat at Amherst College for graduating seniors and alumnae, and most recently, a staff and board leadership training program on equity and financial literacy. Gwendolyn also served on the Great Barrington Citizen's Panel for Police Officer and Sergeant Selection. A certified bilingual interpreter, she also designs education curriculums for workplace language classes.

Gwendolyn is a longtime activist. In 2018, Gwendolyn was selected by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women as one of the Commonwealth's "Unsung Heroines" and named a finalist in Executive Leadership in the 2018 Berkshire Nonprofit Awards. In January-February 2018, Gwendolyn co-curated the commissioned Town Of Great Barrington Du Bois 150th Festival in partnership

with Randy Weinstein and her BRIDGE team. In spring 2017, Gwendolyn spearheaded the county-wide campaign and coalition “Not in the Berkshires” and helped craft and pass her town’s Trust Policy, a step towards a statewide Safe Community Act. And in 2016, Gwendolyn served as the Founding Director of Equity and Inclusion at Bard College at Simon’s Rock.

A frequent speaker and panelist, Gwendolyn spoke most recently at the 38th Annual E. F. Schumacher Lectures celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of W. E. B. Du Bois at the Schumacher Center for New Economics, PolicyLink’s Equity Summit in Chicago, and the Western Mass Health Equity Summit at UMASS Amherst.

Gwendolyn graduated with a certificate in Positive Psychology from the Wholebeing Institute at Kripalu in 2015 after studying with leading field experts, Dr. Tal Ben Shahar and Dr. Maria Sirois. In 2015/2016 she was recognized as a “Berkshire Trendsetter” finalist by 1Berkshire in the “Entrepreneur/Visionary of the Year” category. This same year, BRIDGE won 1Berkshire’s Nonprofit Impact award. In 2016, Berkshire Magazine named Gwendolyn one of the 25 most creative, talented, and influential leaders in the Berkshires. Other honors received include awards from the Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce (2012), the Immigrant Community of the Berkshires (2011), and Women of Color Giving Circle (2009). Governor Deval Patrick, who honored Gwendolyn as an African American of Distinction award in 2010, praised her leadership, calling her a “treasure to Berkshire County and this Commonwealth.”

## **Completed Certifications:**

- *Leadership Institute for Political & Public Impact (Womens’ Fund of Western Massachusetts LIPPI)*
- *National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)*
- *Options Institute: International Training and Learning Center*
- *People’s Institute for Survival & Beyond (PISAB) Undoing Racism®*
- *National Area Health Education Center (AHEC)*



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*Congratulations to our BRIDGE CEO and Founding Director, Gwendolyn VanSant! Your brilliant leadership, vision, and steadfastness has guided BRIDGE through a decade of incredibly impactful work on individual, organizational, community, and systemic levels! Through your teaching, modeling, innovation, creativity and critical analysis, you have created an inspiring and crucial movement for Equity and Justice across Berkshire County. BRIDGE fortifies our county by building resilient and colorbrave spaces, educating and bringing cultural competence to professionals, connecting vulnerable communities with crucial resources, facilitating and encouraging ongoing dialogue, and beyond! You have guided the way and laid the path for all the groundbreaking work that has occurred over the last decade, now, and for many years to come.*

*We are in awe of your passionate, committed, thoughtful, and dynamic leadership. You teach people how to care for each other, how to move forward and progress in the face of challenges, and how to be authentic, vulnerable, and unwavering in their commitments to Justice. We want to express our deep appreciation and thank you for all your incredibly hard work, care, and grace with BRIDGE. We are so excited to have this opportunity to celebrate you and your phenomenal leadership!*

*With Love and Immense Gratitude,  
Your BRIDGE Staff and BRIDGE Board*

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[www.multiculturalbridge.org](http://www.multiculturalbridge.org)

## NOTABLES BUT NOT KNOWN ...

**Ada Lovelace 1815-1852** – a gifted Mathematician who is known to be the first Computer Programmer and was the first to recognize that the Analytical Engine (mechanical general-purpose computer) had applications beyond pure calculations

**Rosalind Franklin 1920-1958** – a Crystallographer who provided the crucial piece of evidence that aided in the discovery of the double helix structure of DNA.

**Sara Breedlove 1867-1919** – aka Madam C.J. Walker an entrepreneur and philanthropist who was considered the wealthiest African-American business woman and wealthiest self-made woman in America at the time of her death. She earned her wealth by developing and marketing a line of cosmetics and hair care products for women.

**Marie Van Brittan Brown 1922- 1999** – Brown was an inventor who along with her husband *invented the home security system* in 1966 and was granted a patent in 1969.

**Bessie Coleman 1892-1926** - first woman of African-America and Native- American descent to hold a *pilot license*.

**Indira Gandhi 1917-1985** – the first and to date only female *Prime Minister of India* serving January 1966 to March 1977 and again January 1980 until her assassination by her own body guards and Sikh Nationalist on October 1984.

**Mary Anning 1799-1847** - a scarcely educated Paleontologist who became Britain's leading expert on prehistoric life by scouring the cliffs of Lyme Regis to dig out large skeletons. Her unique specimens helped *transform beliefs about the origins of life*.

**Clara Barton 1821-1912-** a Nurse who actively aided Union and Confederate soldiers during the Civil War and later *founded the American Red Cross* serving as its President until 1904.

Bard College at Simon's Rock congratulates  
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# **WOMEN HAD TO FIGHT FOR.....**

## **VOTING**

1777 – all states pass laws which take away women's right to vote

1920 – the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote was passed

1941 – Maryland ratified the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote

1984 – Although women have been voting Mississippi was the last state to approve the 19th amendment officially giving women the right to vote.

## **PROPERTY**

1769 – Colonies adopt the English system decreeing women cannot own property in their own name or keep their own earnings

1839 – the first state grants women the right to hold property in their own names only with permission from their husbands.

1900 – every state had passed legislation granting married women the right to keep their own wages and to own property in their own name.

1974 – housing discriminations on the basis of sex and credit against women are outlawed by congress

## **WAGES**

1872 – female federal employees (not private sector) were guaranteed equal pay for equal work under the law

1960 – women are earning 60.7% of what their male counterparts earn

1963 – the equal pay act is passed by congress promising equitable wage for the same work, regardless of the race, color, religion, national origin or sex of the worker.

1990 – women are earning 71.6% of what their male counterparts earn

2017 – women are earning 80.5 % of what their male counterparts earn

2019 – Los Angeles has the narrowest pay gap of 9% where Seattle has the largest pay gap of 30%



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Congratulations, Gwendolyn VanSant! We are so grateful for your compassionate and unwavering leadership!

Gwendolyn is doing revolutionary work in the Berkshires and beyond. Her clear vision and courage have impacted and shifted individual lives, institutions, and communities in ways that will be experienced for decades to come, and that have immediate impact on making our Berkshires more welcoming, safe and just for all. Gwendolyn's teaching, writing, training, and leadership have offered numerous pathways and countless opportunities to engage in the necessary work of building a more equitable and just world.

Committing to racial justice work with BRIDGE has changed our lives profoundly! The framework for working in community and in accountability that Gwendolyn has created and holds is a call to action. It is a call to change how we live and relate — to practice equity and justice in ways that are woven into the rhythms of our daily lives. How are we holding ourselves and each other accountable? Showing up in all of our relationships and in our work with BRIDGE with vulnerability and authenticity, considering the impact of our actions and interactions, and calling ourselves and others in are powerful ways of caring for each other. This care is the foundation for the work Gwendolyn models and inspires.

For many of us, coming to understand our place within systems of oppression and accepting responsibility to unlearn our own racism and internalized white supremacy is humbling, challenging work. We have learned and are still learning so much about the history of and current manifestations of race and racism— on a cultural level, but also a personal one — and we are grateful for all the ways Gwendolyn has guided us in developing an ability to recognize, address and act. As a teacher, Gwendolyn brings a level of dedication and skill that goes unmatched, as well as immeasurable honesty, strength, passion,

BRIDGE epitomises effective, grass-roots organising. Working with Gwendolyn to try to address racism in our county and truly build an equitable and inclusive community is a powerful experience, emotionally and intellectually challenging and absolutely vital. With radical compassion, Gwendolyn demonstrates that by committing to becoming a student-agent in the work of racial justice we can build a strong community together. We stand in awe of Gwendolyn's imagination, no-nonsense kindness, and tenacity. She is an extraordinary woman of the Berkshires who is a shining light in our quiet rural community, and we can think of no one who deserves the Woman of Achievement Award more.

Gwendolyn, we are grateful for your friendship, generosity, kindness and fearless commitment to standing up for what is right--for working every day for justice and safety for all. We are honored and humbled by the difference that you have made in our lives, and in the lives of so many in the Berkshires and beyond. Thank you, Gwendolyn--and congratulations!

With Gratitude,  
Members of BRIDGE Accountability and BRIDGE TRJ White Caucus



## CHANGEMAKER STRATEGIES

### WE SALUTE YOU!

*"The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference."*

-Audre Lorde

*Changemaker Strategies salutes our colleague and friend Gwendolyn VanSant for being recognized as a fierce leader and Woman of Achievement. We celebrate her gracious and bold work and life!*

*Thank you, Gwendolyn, for speaking up and building bridges as you change perspectives, change lives, and create community actions and policies for equity and justice!*

-Tuti B. Scott  
Founder & President  
Changemaker Strategies



*Gwendolyn VanSant and Tuti B. Scott with participants at a Beloved & Embodied Community Berkshires gathering*

### Coaching Leaders, Strengthening Teams

Changemaker Strategies works with visionary leaders and bold teams to navigate change and growth while staying focused on mission and purpose. From leadership development and succession planning to strategic planning, communications, and more, we support wise changemakers in fully leveraging their power for the greater good. Changemaker Strategies events and convenings bring together diverse leaders from across all fields to collectively dream, design, and advance work that matters. Join us September 16-17 in Austin for "Women and Money: Making Money Moves that Matter."

[we-are-changemakers.com](http://we-are-changemakers.com)

***Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not, and therefore the fount of all invention and innovation. In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared. ~ J. K. Rowling***

I wonder how often Gwendolyn has paused in her lifetime, maybe just briefly over a cup of tea, or as she was wrestling a sock onto a child, to let in the whispers of **imagination** that have enabled her to create so much out of the fountain within her where dreams dwell?

Many of us have dreams, but few bring them to life, catalyzing **invention** and **innovation** as Rowling states, and also **inspiration**. We have been touched and moved to action in our county by the dreaming that Gwendolyn brings forward through her **ideas**, her capacity to build connections, and her vibrant and yet calming energy.

Just as Marva Collins, once taught us that there was a brilliant child locked in every student, Gwendolyn shows us that there is a generous heart locked inside each adult.

And just as W.E.B. Du Bois reminded us that a true and worthy **ideal** frees and uplifts us, Gwendolyn demonstrates that the act of building bridges, so rooted in her **ideal** of a fair and healthy and respectful living, is an act done best together.

Ideals, imagination, inspiration, innovation and invention - all exist as a spiraling web within her and around her, opening doors to not just empathy, as Rowling instructs, but engagement in the highest tasks of humanity.

~ Dr. Maria Sirois, the letter "I"

**ASPIRE is the name of the WholeBeing cohort at Kripalu where Gwendolyn spent an intensive 1-year immersion in positive psychology presented by Dr. Tal Ben Shahar Megha Buttenheim and Dr. Maria Sirois. This program was for leaders, coaches, and executives from around the world at Kripalu. Each of her partners and their mentor, Dr. Sirois, created a collective acrostic poem in tribute to Gwendolyn.**



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Honored to support  
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program and the  
organization's recognition  
of women of achievement  
in the Berkshires.

Congratulations to  
***Gwendolyn***  
for her dedication  
to our community.

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**We extend heartfelt congratulations to Gwendolyn VanSant for receiving the 2019 Woman of Achievement Award and for her relentless spirit, vision and passion for racial equity and justice in the Berkshires and beyond.**

Thank you to Berkshire Business and Professional Women for hosting such an excellent event, and for the years of commitment in support of professional Berkshire women.

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2019 Woman of Achievement

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*Thank you!*

**The Pittsfield Cooperative Bank** would like to pay tribute to Gwendolyn Hampton VanSant for her outstanding commitment and achievements to our community and to the ladies who make up 70% of our staff. It is their passion and compassion that make the Berkshires a better place to live, work and play.

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BSM will continually strive to meet constantly changing customer requirements and critical deadlines utilizing the most current and flexible technologies for sterile drug manufacturing together with robust quality systems to ensure the highest level of sterility assurance and quality achievable.

BSM is supportive of all women in business and primarily in science. We work hard to encourage growth for female scientists and provide opportunities for their career growth.

# ELEVATE



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Congratulations  
Gwendolyn!



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# CONGRATULATIONS, GWENDOLYN!

Your guidance and expertise have helped us to shape a culture of inclusivity and understanding which will continue to grow and thrive for years to come. Thank you!

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Congratulates

## Gwendolyn VanSant

as Berkshire Business & Professional Women 's  
2019 Woman of Achievement

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*Congratulations  
to Gwendolyn VanSant  
from the whole WAMily!*



We are delighted to partnering with  
Gwendolyn and **Multicultural BRIDGE**  
on our fall Mainstage play.

# PIPELINE

by *Dominique Morisseau*

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***Congratulations Gwendolyn VanSant  
Woman of Achievement 2019***

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*Pittsfield Cooperative Bank*

*Robert and Mary Ann Norris*

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