Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women

# Annual Report 2014

## History of the Commission

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy created the President's Council on the Status of Women with Eleanor Roosevelt as its first Chairman. The report issued by that Council encouraged each state to create a similar organization to look at current legal status, potential problems of gender bias and key quality of life issues facing women and families. Governor Henry Bellmon established the first Governor's Commission on the Status of Women during his first term as Governor in 1965. Each Governor thereafter established either a Committee or a Commission by Executive Order and appointed a group of individuals to serve. By choice of each Governor, the Commission ranged from 20 to 90 members. Governor George Nigh established the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame in 1982, as part of the responsibilities of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women.

In 1994, through the efforts of Speaker of the House Glen Johnson, Senate President Pro Tempore Bob Cullison, Senator Angela Monson, Representative Laura Boyd, and a dedicated group of women, legislation creating the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women (OCSW) passed and was signed by Governor David Walters. The appointments are now made by the Governor, Senate President Pro Tempore, and Speaker of the House and consist of 30 members appointed for five-year terms. The initial appointment terms were staggered. By statue, the terms will end on June 30th of each year.

In addition to the appointed members, the Commission is assisted by an Advisory Council whose main function is supporting the Commission in meeting the requirements of the Oklahoma Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches (OLEJ.) The Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame recognizes and honors exceptional Oklahoma women whose outstanding service benefits the lives of women and families in Oklahoma, the nation, or the world. We look for women who have made significant and enduring contributions in a particular discipline, profession or field, including business, community service, public service, philanthropy, the arts, sports and the sciences. These women have elevated the status of women, opened new frontiers, acted as role models, and been champions for women.

**Mission:** "We strengthen and empower women in Oklahoma by improving their opportunities and quality of life".

**Vision:** "The Commission provides leadership and direction for actions to support the successes of Oklahoma women and encouragement of women in leadership". The Commission acts as a focal point for other agencies and communities to provide resource information, expertise and input on women's issues.

## Duties of Commission

The OCSW offers advice on equity issues relating to gender bias, state agencies and employees, communities, organizations, and businesses of this state which desire the services of the Commission. Duties of the Commission includes but is not limited to, monitoring legislation as to whether the legislation is discriminatory toward one gender or whether the gender of an individual would have an effect on the enforcement of the legislation, acting as a resource on issues related to women and gender bias, conducting meetings and seminars within the State of Oklahoma as appropriate to support the goals and duties of the OCSW. In addition, the Commission shall report to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of its activities.

## Committees

The OCSW accomplishes its mission and vision through the works and goals of its Administrative, Topical, and Event committees. Each committee is comprised of members from the Commission and the Advisory Council.,

## Administrative Committees

Communications Committee
*Purpose of Committee:* The Communications Committee promotes the activities of the Commission throughout the State of Oklahoma to create awareness.

Executive Committee
*Purpose of Committee: The Executive Committee* strives to improve the quality of life for women and families in Oklahoma through coordinating activities of the Commission, convening ad hoc committees, and coordinating with the Office of Management and Enterprise Services to oversee efficient management of finances of the Commission, the website and administrative office of the Commission.

Budget and Restructuring Committee
*Purpose of Committee:* The Restructuring Committee strives to improve the quality of life for women and families in Oklahoma through effective and efficient utilization of appropriated dollars of the Commission and through efficient structure of the Commission to conduct and carry out the Legislative Mandates.
Legislative and Policy Committee
*Purpose of Committee:* The Legislative and Policy Committee strives to improve the quality of life of women and families in Oklahoma through monitoring state, local and national legislation related to women and families.

## Topical Committees

Health (Physical and Mental) and Aging Committee
*Purpose of Committee:* The Physical and Mental Health Committee strives to improve the health status, quality of life and reduce disparities of women and families in Oklahoma through communicating health messages, conducting seminars and special health events.

Incarceration of Women Committee
*Purpose of Committee:* The Incarceration of Women Committee strives to improve the quality of life and reduce disparities of women and families in Oklahoma through partnering with other coalitions, agencies and organization on activities and actions to reduce the incarceration of women.

Family Issues Committee
*Purpose of Committee:* The Family Issues Committee is focused on improving the quality of life for Oklahoma families.

## Event Committees

Annual Kate Barnard Award and Luncheon
The purpose of the award is to recognize elected, appointed, and/or government salaried women who have made a difference in Oklahoma though outstanding service as public servants.

Guardian Award Committee
The Guardian Award is presented to an elected official who have made significant governmental contributions to guarding, protecting and preserving the rights of women and families.

Annual Retreat
Annual Retreats are conducted so that the Commission can develop a plan of action and long-range strategy for effective functioning,

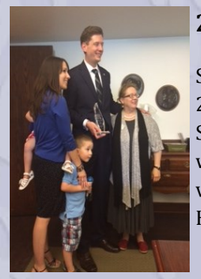
Summit
Every biannual odd year, the Commission hosts a Solutions, Initiatives, Strategies (SIS) summit. Our Women's Summits include broad discussions of issues and in-depth looks at women's incarceration, gestational diabetes, This years Summit focused on Trafficking. In the state.

Women's Hall of Fame
The Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame (WHOF) was established under the administration of Governor George Nigh in 1982, and is held every other year during odd numbered years. The purpose of the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame shall be to provide highest honor to Oklahoma women who reside in Oklahoma or were former residents of the state, and who provided outstanding service benefiting the lives of women and families in Oklahoma, the nation, or elsewhere in the world.

Special Committee – History and Archiving of Records
*Purpose of Committee*: The History and Archiving of Records Committee is charged with developing a dynamic history of the Commission and to oversee the archiving of Commission records since its inception

## 2014 Kate Barnard Recipient

The Kate Barnard Award and Luncheon were held February 27, 2014 in the State Capitol's Blue Room. This year's award was given to Terri White, Commissioner, Oklahoma Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. White was honored for her outstanding leadership abilities and tireless efforts to improve the quality of life for Oklahomans living with mental or addictive disorder. Pictured from left is Chairman Lou Kohlman, Commissioner White, and Past Chairman Adeline Yerkes. Photo compliment of the Oklahoman



## 2014 Guardian Award Recipient

Senator John Holt was presented the Guardian Award on May 22, 2014 at the State Capitol by Lou Kohlman, Chair of OCSW. Senator Holt received the award for his work on HB 2526 which requires law enforcement to ask a series of questions of victims to assess their physical danger. Pictured are Senator Holt and his family and Chairman Lou Kohlman

Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women

OKLAHOMA SOLUTIONS, INITIATIVES, STRATEGIES:

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The OCSW held its SIS Summit July 17, 2014 at the Downtown OKC Sheraton. The one-day conference included speakers, expert panelists and breakout sessions. The Commission partnered with the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics, the Oklahoma Women's Coalition, the Junior League of Oklahoma City, and Jones Public Relations. Topics included the detection of human traffickers; establishing protocols and policies for state government, and law enforcement agencies, identifying opportunities to provide assistance to victims and survivors; reviewing existing services and facilities; meeting survivors' needs; and developing public and legislative awareness regarding the prevention, protection and prosecution of human trafficking. For additional information visit our website at www.ok.gov/ocsw/

## Celebrating Oklahoma Women
## 20th Anniversary Luncheon

Twenty years ago the Oklahoma Legislature established the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women. In the last twenty years the OCSW has advised the Governor and Legislature on issues relating to women, has engaged citizens statewide, and has partnered with other agencies and organizations to fulfill our mission. On November , 13, the OCSW held a 20th Anniversary luncheon at the Governor's Pavilion to commemorate the anniversary.

## National Association of Commissions for Women Representative

Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women is represented by Commissioner Bernice Mitchell, and Kitti Asberry, Executive Director The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women has been a member of the NACW since 2003 and has had representation on its Board of Directors since 2006 and on the Executive Team since 2010. OCSW, through its representative, continues to play a prominent role in the make-up of the NACW Board and Committees. At the present time, work is being done in the areas of Nominations, Recruitment, Elections, Board Development training and By-Laws review. Over the last 5 years, OCSW has won an Achievement Award for the outstanding mission related programs it has produced. Currently Mitchell is serving as Treasurer. Asberry who was serving as a Director, was elected to serve a 2 year term as Secretary.

## Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is chaired by Catherine Haynes. The Advisory Council was created and approved by the Commission as a body January 26, 1995. The Advisory Council's purpose is to assist the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women in meeting its requirements; to act as an outreach to the women of the state; to be a resource and clearinghouse for research and information on issues related to women and gender bias; to act as an advisory entity on equity issues to state agencies, communities, organizations and businesses of the state, and to establish recommendations for action to improve the quality of life for Oklahoma women, children and families. The active advisory council members participated as contributing members for all of the commission meetings and special events this year. The Council ended the year with seventy-seven members .

## 2014 Commission Membership

The Commission consists of 30 commissioners appointed by the Governor of the State of Oklahoma, the President Pro Tempore of the State Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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| Chair: | Lou Kohlman, Oklahoma City |
| Vice Chair: | Mary Louise Binning, Edmond |
| Secretary: | Karen Sneary, Alva |
| Finance: | Victoria Woods, Edmond |
| Advisory Council Chair: | Catherine Haynes, Ponca City |
| Executive Director | Kitti Asberry, Oklahoma City |

### Commissioners

Brenda Barwick, Edmond
Beverly Binkowski, Oklahoma City
Mary Louise Binning, Oklahoma City
Maria Bray-Trapp, Edmond
Patty Bryant, Tulsa
Representative Lee Denney, Cushing
Senator AJ Griffin, Guthrie
Linda Haneborg, Oklahoma City
Estela Hernandez, Oklahoma City
Joyce Horton, Chickasha
Denise Kinzie, Cushing
Jean Lehr, Edmond
Valeska Littlefield, Tulsa
Shondra McCage, Ada
Amy McCord, Oklahoma City
Bernice Mitchell, Stillwater
Chris Morris, Oklahoma City
Terry Neese, Oklahoma City
Representative Jadine Nolan, Sand Springs
Valerie Thompson, Oklahoma City
Gloria Torres, Oklahoma City
Nikki Waters, Shawnee
Adeline Yerkes, Edmond

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