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2024 Leading Women Awards Celebrate Harford County Women

In honor of Women's History Month, Harford County celebrated local women of the past, present and future

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In honor of Women's History Month, Harford County celebrated local women of the past, present and future at an awards ceremony on March 2.

The Harford County Department of Housing & Community Services and Commission for Women held their 2024 Leading Women Awards ceremony at the Richlin Catering & Event Center in Edgewood. The awards recognize young women who are dedicated to compassionate community service and superior academic achievement. This year's ceremony also honored the late Mildred Louise Gore Stansbury as the

2024 Leading Woman of Yesterday and keynote speaker, Dr. Andrée M. Mountain-Campbell, as the Leading Woman of Today.

There were 12 young nominees for the 2024 awards: Imani Aluoch, Havre de Grace Middle School; Elise Buckler, Fallston High School; Khania Charlton, Havre de Grace Middle School; Catherine Clayton, Swan Creek School; Tamara Cosom, Aberdeen Middle School; Chloe Gauthier, Havre de Grace High School; Olivia Hahn, Havre de Grace High School; Stacy Kamau, Joppatowne High School; Keliss Levone-Myers, Edgewood High School; Delaney O'Mailey, Fallston High School; Abigail Richard, Fallston High School; and Korynn Sims, North Harford High School.

The 2024 Leading Women Award winners are Catherine Clayton for grades 7 – 8; and Elise Buckler for grades 11 – 12.

Catherine Clayton is in eighth grade at Swan Creek School, where she holds a 4.0 GPA. Catherine is proficient in technology and, because of the virtual nature of the school, she creates videos for its social media platforms and morning announcements. She is co-editor of the literary magazine, secretary for the National Junior Honor Society and was awarded first place in the Maryland Young Authors contest. Catherine is in Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and created a community Emergency Rapid Response team to help neighbors during storms. As a virtual Boy Scout patrol leader, she creates schedules for environmental activities and executed plans to bring back Eastern Bluebirds to her community. Catherine intends to pursue a career as a lead systems engineer. She admires Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low for giving young girls a place to embrace their strengths and unlock their full potential.

Elise Buckler is a senior at Fallston High School with a 4.8 GPA. She has a passion for mathematics, a field she intends to pursue in college. Elise volunteers with Habitat for Humanity and her church. She serves on the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), as vice president of the Student Government Association and is the founder and president of the school's chapter of One Love Foundation, giving students a safe space to discuss personal struggles. Elise was selected by the foundation to represent Maryland students with the Maryland Board of Education and was appointed by Fallston High School's principal to lead a mental health council for students. Elise admires author Rachel Ignatofsky for showcasing women who made an impact and pushed boundaries despite gender inequity.

As winners in their categories, each girl received a check for \$1,500 and each of the nominees received \$100 courtesy of event sponsors. Citations from Harford County Executive, Bob Cassilly were also presented.

"These outstanding young women are already changing the world," County Executive Cassilly said. "They have achieved excellence in school, and they volunteer countless hours to improve the lives of others. On behalf of the citizens of Harford County, I am proud to congratulate the 2024 Leading Women."

The late Mildred Louise Gore Stansbury was honored as the Leading Woman of Yesterday. Stacey Rebbert, chair of the Harford County Commission for Women, recounted Mrs. Stansbury's life story and community presence as the first African American to serve and be elected to political office in Harford County. While in office, she organized the creation and adoption of the Havre de Grace flag and coat of arms, changed the designation of the small streets largely populated by blacks, renaming them from alleys to lanes, and got the Somerset Manor housing community federally subsidized for low-income residents in Havre de Grace. Mrs. Stansbury's sister-in-law was in attendance and addressed the nominees briefly. She said, "If Mildred were here, she would say "Keep on Girls!"

The keynote speaker and this year's Leading Woman of Today was Dr. Andrée M. Mountain-Campbell, founder and director of MOHAR Mental Wellness.

Addressing the young women, Mountain-Campbell said, "Your mission in life is to be the greatest you. When you wake up, you better start running. Why? Because you have a world to change."

The Commission would like to thank the Richlin Catering & Event Center for hosting this event and thank the following event sponsors for their generosity: Harford County Public Library, Harford Mutual Insurance Group, Harford Chamber of Commerce, APGFCU, Magerk's Pub & Grill, Emerald Technical Solutions, and Enotria Restaurant.

The Harford County Women's Commission consists of 15 volunteer members appointed by the county executive and approved by the County Council. Their mission is to support the economic, social, and political equality of women. For more information, please visit www.harfordcountymd.gov or call 410-638-3045. Applications for the 2025 Harford County Leading Women Awards will be available in the fall of 2024.

Photo Caption: Pictured from L-R Back Row: Barbara Richardson, director Housing & Community Services; Stacey Rebbert, chair of the Harford County Commission for Women; Leading Women nominees Tamara Cosom, Keliss Levone-Myers, Elise Buckler, Abigail Richard, Delaney O'Mailey, Khandia Charlton, and County Executive, Bob Cassilly. Seated from L-R Leading Women nominees Chloe Gauthier, Olivia Hahn, Stacy Kamau, Imani Aluoch, and Korynn Simms. (Not pictured, Catherine Clayton)