

# Congratulations!

Robin Balke, 2022-2023 Woman of the Year



At the November 3, 2022, SBW Public Relations Dinner, Robin Balke received the Woman of the Year award for 2022-2023. In her introduction, Public Relations Chair Lori Haney said, "...this year's recipient left her indelible mark on this organization and countless others. This woman is a leader in nearly all aspects of her life. Leading by example professionally and through her service to our community."

Lori also noted that within the past two months, Robin worked a full-time job, yet found time to attend three conferences or trainings, ten community events and fundraisers for numerous organizations, and spent time with family and friends on six trips or outings.

Robin serves on the Whiteman Air Force Base Community Council, is a member of the Sedalia Area Chamber of Commerce, and attended the Sedalia Police Department Citizen's Police Academy.

Robin is a founding member of DeFeet, an organization that focuses on suicide prevention. She was awarded Volunteer of the Year in 2021 for the Boys and Girls Clubs of West Central Missouri. Robin is past president of the Human Resources Association of West Central Missouri, and is serving her second year as Sedalia Business Women's president.

In June 2020, Robin was interviewed for Bob Satnan's Slice of Life Column published in the *Sedalia Democrat*. The title alone, "Balke 'happy to help' her community," sums up why she deserved to be the SBW Woman of the Year. In the interview, Robin said, "I try to keep my focus to things that are important to me or speak to me on some level."

The Sedalia Community is fortunate to have a volunteer who doesn't just help so many organizations, but is happy to help.

Congratulations, Robin, for being named the 2022-2023 Woman of the Year!

## Congratulations!

Joanna Anderson and Lori Wightman 2021-2022 Co-Women of the Year



State Fair Community College President Dr. Joanna Anderson and Bothwell Regional Health Center CEO Lori Wightman were honored by Sedalia Business Women as Co-Women of the Year.

**2021-2022 Co-Woman of the Year  
Dr. Joanna Anderson  
Congratulations!**



*Dr. Joanna Anderson and Lori Haney, Public Relations Chair*

Dr. Joanna Anderson has been the president of State Fair Community College since 2013. She considers adding the Olen Howard Workforce Innovation Center to be one of her biggest accomplishments during her tenure as president. She has also been part of adding new athletic programs at SFCC including esports, target shooting, cross country and track.

Joanna has been a leader since she was the first female president of her high school's FFA chapter. She credits many mentors along the way as she stepped into the position of president of SFCC.

After joining Sedalia Business Women, Joanna found the group to be comprised of women active in the community and dedicated to their careers. Of receiving her Woman of the Year Award, she was quoted in a *Sedalia Democrat*\* article: "It is definitely one of the biggest honors I have ever received because it's given by my peers."

Joanna believes it is important to find a workplace that is fulfilling. She stressed the importance of having a support system in place.

Congratulations, Joanna, for being chosen as SBW's Co-Woman of the Year!

**2021-2022 Co-Woman of the Year  
Lori Wightman  
Congratulations!**



*Lori Wightman and Lori Haney, Public Relations Chair*

In June of 2019, Lori became Bothwell Health Center's CEO. Lori brought twenty years of administrative experience in healthcare before stepping into her current role.

Lori began her career as a nurse. She worked in general medicine, surgery, and in infection control. She was certified as an Infection Control nurse and received awards for her work from two universities. She was elected as a Governor in the American College of Healthcare Executives. More recently, she has served on the Missouri Hospital Association board of directors.

Our community was fortunate to have Lori's leadership at Bothwell Regional Health Center during the pandemic. The well-run Covid-19 vaccination clinic at the Missouri State Fairgrounds was probably the most efficiently planned clinic in the state. When other communities failed in their efforts, many drove to Sedalia for their vaccinations.

Lori told Nicole Cooke of the Sedalia Democrat when asked about the role Bothwell took in the collective response to the pandemic, "I have firmly believed that when all is said and done, all you have is your integrity and natural talents—so protect and be proud of both."

Congratulations, Lori, for being named as SBW's Co-Woman of the Year!

\*Reference: Cooke, Nicole, "Honoring Businesswomen," Sedalia Democrat, November 27, 2021

\*Photo credit: Randy Kirby



**2020 – 2021 SBW Woman of the Year  
Betty Albrecht  
Congratulations!**



President Debbie Ulmer and Betty Albrecht

Betty Albrecht was awarded the prestigious title of SBW Woman of the Year at the November 2020 Public Relations dinner.

Shirley McCown, 2019-2020 Woman of the Year, presented the nomination. Betty was recognized for her service in the Pettis County Community Santa program, the Sedalia Area Literacy Council, her church, and other community organizations, as well as her active role in Sedalia Business Women.

Betty has been a member of SBW for several years. Her sponsor Cindy Weaver invited her to several club meetings. The invitation to join SBW came at a time when Betty was looking for a new and different organization to support. We are so glad she chose us!

Betty said, she wants to “do all I can to help others.” She serves on the committee for the SBW Chicken Dinner fundraiser, helps with scholarships, and is the membership chair.

To support Betty’s nomination for Woman of the Year, Rhoda Moore wrote, “She does more wonderful things for Sedalia than six other women.” Michelle Sparks listed fifteen different organizations that have benefited from Betty’s dedication and expertise.

Sedalia Business Women extend our sincerest thanks for Betty’s contributions to our community and our club. Congratulations, Betty, for this well deserved honor!

## **2019 – 2020 SBW Woman of the Year**

**Shirley McCown**

**Congratulations!**



Shirley McCown was chosen as the Sedalia Business Women's 2019-2020 Woman of the year for her outstanding service to SBW and to the Community. Several of her family members joined Sedalia Business Women to celebrate her award.

Shirley has been active in SBW for more than 18 years. For many years, she has chaired the Music Committee, or more accurately, she *is* the Music Committee. She always obtained music from local student musical groups for the December Christmas meeting. She assures beautiful, appropriate decorations and music for the installation of officers' ceremony.

She is devout in her faith and spends many hours volunteering at her church. She works with the shoe ministry, providing shoes for school children who are in need of footwear. She volunteers for PATCH (Parents and their Children) and provides transportation for children to visit their parents in prison.

Shirley is an active volunteer at Bothwell Regional Health Center on a regular basis and volunteers several hours weekly. As a cancer survivor, Shirley volunteers for the Cancer Center at the hospital. She is instrumental in organizing volunteers for the annual Lub Dub race and helps with organization, sign in, and various other jobs. She also helps with Meals on Wheels, Open Door donations, and ringing the Salvation Army bells for SBW.

Shirley is beautiful inside and out. She is a very caring and giving individual who works behind the scenes—never seeking the spotlight. She has a wonderful sense of humor. She is one of our unsung heroes and exemplifies the attributes of "Woman of the Year."

Congratulations, Shirley, for this well-deserved honor.

## **2018 – 2019 SBW Woman of the Year**

**Michelle Sparks**

**Congratulations!**



Michelle Sparks was chosen as the SBW 2018-2019 Woman of the Year.

Michelle is dedicated to bettering the lives of women and children in and around our community. She has been a dedicated member of Sedalia Business Women and Business Women of Missouri since 2002.

During her time as a member, Michelle served on, and chaired, numerous committees. In 2010, she joined the SBW executive committee as recording secretary. Rising up through the ranks, she became president in 2013 encouraging members to “Pay it Forward.” Ever a committed member to the values and mission of SBW and BWM, Michelle filled the role of president, again, in 2015 when she invested in membership recruitment and retention, as well as promoting the visibility of our local and state scholarships.

Michelle served on the state level in 2016-2017 as the NW Regional Director-Elect and then as NW Regional Director. During that time, she served as a knowledgeable liaison between BWM and our local SBW club. Due to her diligent work on scholarships, she was asked to join the BWM Foundation in 2018, furthering her commitment to help women in our community and across the state.

Beyond her commitment to SBW and BWM, Michelle is a strong woman of faith that has served as a spiritual mentor to numerous children and families in our area. She is a member of First Baptist Church where she has served in a variety of capacities: 1<sup>st</sup> grade Sunday school teacher for 13 years, numerous children’s ministries including vacation Bible school, Kids at Praise (KAPOW) as well as being a mentor for the Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) program. If this weren’t enough to keep her busy, she finds time to be a member of the Show-Me Sound Chorus and a clogging group in Windsor.

Michelle’s success in life has been no small feat. She returned to college late in life to pursue her education while being a wife and mother. Michelle received her Bachelor of Science in Education and now serves as a Para Professional at Heber Hunt Elementary.

Michelle’s character, work ethic, and generosity embody everything that is good about SBW and our community. Congratulations, Michelle, for this well-deserved honor!



## 2017 – 2018 SBW Woman of the Year

### Lori Haney Congratulations!



Lori Haney is dedicated to bettering the lives of all abused persons—men, women or children. She is diligent in her duties as Executive Director of CASA, which includes outreach to people of all ages and gender. Mostly, CASA helps women and children who are victims of domestic violence.

Lori serves as a mentor to some of our area's most vulnerable women. She has the compassion and common sense needed to be an ally when an abused person needs it most. Yet, she is supportive and understands that breaking the cycle of domestic violence is a process and each woman must do that in her own way, following her own timeframe.

Lori has shown extraordinary leadership skills in our community. She was instrumental in bringing the “Vagina Monologues” to Sedalia. She had the courage and conviction to forge forward without a backward glance among the clamor of those who just didn’t “get” the purpose of the monologues.

Lori is a dynamic speaker and uses her skill to benefit women. She presented a simulation to SBW that walked participants through an abuse scenario with choices at each step. This was an eye-opening experience about the limited choices of domestic abuse victims. She gave a powerful presentation at the Northwest Regional Conference. She helped educate participants as to what signs to look for in victims of domestic abuse, how to help, and how to make a difference. She won the 2013-14 Individual Growth Speak off at the State Conference.

Behind the scenes, Lori keeps our local apprised of legislation that affects women. Because of her, we understood why one version of the “Violence Against Women Act” was more meaningful and effective than the other. We knew which one to ask our legislators to support.

Lori has served as President, President Elect, Vice President, and served as BWM's Domestic Violence Chair in 2013-14 and 2017-18. She has been SBW's Public Relations Co-chair for several years. As president, Lori did an excellent job of keeping the member informed of all weekly events. She also serves as an excellent liaison with the state.

Whether it involves grants or fundraisers for CASA, she is determined to provide the best environment she can for CASA residents. She has their backs!

With any project, Lori is supportive and helpful. She shows integrity, determination, and a give-'em-hell attitude as needed. Congratulations to Lori Haney, a deserving candidate, for SBW's Woman of the Year 2017-2018.

*\*Photo courtesy of Randy Kirby*

## **2016 – 2017 SBW Woman of the Year**

**Mary Merritt  
Congratulations!**



Sedalia Business Women awarded the 2016-17 Woman of the Year to Mary Merritt. Last year's winner, Carolyn Green, presented the coveted award during the club's November public relations dinner held at Best Western State Fair Inn.

Merritt is active in the Pettis County League of Women Voters where she currently serves as co-president, and the Missouri League of Women Voters where she currently serves as vice-president. During this election year, she served as moderator of candidate forums hosted by the League to ensure hearing from all candidates who wished to participate. She encourages listening to all sides of an issue which helps voters make an informed decision.

In May of 2015, she received the Harriet Woods Community Service Award for outstanding service to Sedalia and Pettis County. She has chaired several community committees to help make Sedalia and Pettis County a better place to live, including Citizens for a Clean Sedalia where she made more than ten recommendations to the city council and all but one was approved. She serves on the Public Works board and was appointed to the Rental Inspection Committee. Most recently, the mayor appointed Merritt to fill the vacant city council seat in Ward 4.

She was an active member of American Business Women's Association for over fifty-five years and served in many national positions. She was chosen as one of the top ten Women of the Year at the National Level. She has been an active member of Sedalia Business Women since 2012 following the demise of the ABWA Chapter in Sedalia.

Merritt graduated from Windsor High School as an honor student and received a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Central Missouri. She began her career at Missouri Public Service and then worked as an Administrative Assistant to William R. Parkhurst, founder of Parkhurst Manufacturing, retiring in 1996 after thirty-nine years. She remains on the Board of Directors of Parkhurst Manufacturing.

Not being able to stay retired too long, she currently works as the office manager for Ragar Banners. She celebrated her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday recently and is still going strong!

Congratulations, Mary Merritt, 2016-17 Woman of the Year!

## **2015 – 2016 SBW Woman of the Year**

### **Carolyn Green Congratulations!**



Carolyn Green was chosen the Woman of the Year recipient for 2015 -2016.

She has been a member of SBW since 2001. During this time, she served one term as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and two terms as Secretary of SBW. In addition to being an officer, she served on many of the committees often as chair.

Carolyn retired from the Missouri Department of Social Services in September of 2000 after working ten years with the Department of Mental Health and twenty-plus years with the Department of Social Services, with more than half of her positions being state level supervisory and administrative.

The very month Carolyn retired, she became the founding Executive Director of Child Safe of Central Missouri, Inc., a child advocacy center serving eleven

Missouri counties.

During her tenure at Child Safe, her accomplishments have included:

- Accreditation by the National Children's Alliance
- Member of Missouri Kids First, network of child advocacy centers in Missouri
- Assisted in development of statewide database for Missouri's child advocacy centers
- Various fund-raising events, including the Annual Adult Egg Hunt, Annual Dessert Auction and others
- Development of multidisciplinary teams in eleven counties served by Child Safe
- Recipient of State and federal grants

In addition, Carolyn was appointed to serve on the Children's Justice Task Force whose mission and responsibility is to assist the State in developing, establishing, and operating programs designed to improve child welfare, in particular, the handling of child abuse and neglect cases, the handling of child abuse related fatalities, the prosecution of child abuse cases, particularly sexual abuse, and the handling of cases involving children with disabilities or serious health related problems. The Task Force is also charged with the oversight and distribution of federal grant money and reformation of policy and State laws related to the improvement of the investigative response to child abuse and neglect and to reduce trauma to child victims.

Carolyn has always been a voice for children, and it is because of her tireless efforts, Child Safe is able to address the needs of abused children.

In addition to her two children, Brandon and Tasha, Carolyn has two grandchildren, Hadley and Riley.

The members of Sedalia Business Women are honored to have Carolyn Green as a member of our local Club and are pleased to present her with our Club's highest honor, Woman of the Year.

## **2014 – 2015 SBW Woman of the Year**

**Linda Alcorn**  
**Congratulations!**



**Linda Alcorn** was named Sedalia Business Women's 2014-2015 Woman of the Year at the Public Relations Dinner Meeting November 6. Linda has been a member for 23 years and has served on most of SBW's committees more than once. She is organized, dependable and completes everything asked of her in fine fashion. Simply put, she is that member that every organization wishes to have.

She has been a business woman most of her life, as she is the owner of Trans Central Suppliers. She and her husband, Norman, own and have operated Countryside Senior RV Park in Sedalia for over 22 years. She has three step-children and five grandchildren.

She has served on numerous boards, including President of the Missouri Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds for eight years and she served as Executive Director of MOARC for 10 years. She continues to serve as a member on the Board of MOARC, and has made numerous trips to Jefferson City and Washington, D.C. to lobby for MOARC and tourism in the State of Missouri.

She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Sedalia Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. The CVB is one of the boards that helped to promote the Fireball Run that came through Sedalia to bring awareness to missing children across the United States. Over the years she has volunteered as a Salvation Army Bell Ringer and at the Open Door Food Pantry.

SBW is honored to count Linda in our ranks of membership. Her contributions to our club and entire community are countless. On behalf of the entire organization, congratulations to Linda Alcorn for being named the 2014-2015 SBW Woman of the Year.



## **2013 – 2014 SBW Woman of the Year**

**Laura Taylor**  
**Congratulations!**



Sedalia Business Women's 2013-2014 Woman of the Year has been a face associated with State Fair Community College for forty-one years! We understand she may have started before that even, as a student employee. Laura Taylor has been a member of Sedalia Business Women since December, 2003, and we are happy to recognize her tonight as our Woman of the Year.

Laura worked as a part time teacher's aide, then a part time instructor to a full time instructor for the business program. She was named Associated Dean of Academic Affairs in 2006, then Dean of Career & Technology Education in 2009. Laura was recognized as Instructor of the Year in 1992. Laura has since "retired," but continues as an adjunct instructor at SFCC.

Laura started her education at SFCC and received both her bachelor's and master's in Business and Office Education at CMSU (now UCM) in Warrensburg.

Laura has also been active in the community. She has served as a Chamber Ambassador and on the Chamber Board of Directors, and has probably been involved in many more community organizations that we don't know about. She has coordinated "Hire Attire" for SFCC for the past eight years.

Please join us as we recognize Laura Taylor as our Woman of the Year 2013-2014!

## **2012 – 2013 SBW Woman of the Year**

### **Dianne Simon Congratulations!**



Dianne Simon is Vice President and Property Manager for the Thompson Hills Investment Corporation in Sedalia, Missouri. Properties managed include the Thompson Hills Shopping Center; the Sylvia G. Thompson Residence Center, a skilled care nursing home; and several other commercial locations with retail tenants. She is excellent at marketing her employers business and following through with projects. Prior experience includes management of two radio stations and employment as a legal assistant.

A lifelong resident of Cole Camp, Missouri, Dianne is a daughter to Paul and Lillie Luebbering. She is married to Bill Barrick and has two children, Brandon, age 29, and Christina, age 23.

Community service is important to Dianne as evidenced by her own personal involvement. As a leader in the community she works hard in her endeavors and is excellent at getting others involved. She is a board member for the Base Community Council Board at Whiteman Air Force Base and Chair of the Sedalia Chamber Military Affairs Committee. In Dianne's words "She believes in giving back to those who have given so much to protect our freedoms." She is the current Chair and a founding member of the Sedalia Blue Ribbon Steering Committee. Dianne has also served as a Sedalia Chamber Ambassador and past Vice President of both the Sedalia and Cole Camp Chambers of Commerce. Diane is Vice President for the newly formed board of directors of Cole Camp Community Center. Dianne was awarded the Pink Flamingo award in February of this year in recognition of her contributions to the community

Dianne is a graduate of Cole Camp High School. She attended State Fair Community College and received her bachelor's in Business Management from Central Methodist University. Diane finished her Bachelor's degree while working full time, serving on multiple boards, volunteering her time for community events, caring for her family and to top it all off, in her last semester while studying for finals and getting ready for her graduation, she also squeezed in a wedding for her daughter.

We, at Sedalia Business Women's organization, feel blessed to have Dianne in our organization. Dianne joined Sedalia local Business & Professional Women organization in 2003. She definitely didn't sit idle on this endeavor. Dianne has served the Sedalia Business Women's club in many different offices and has chaired many committees. In 2007 she served as our corresponding Secretary and continued to move through the offices to serve as our 2009-2010 President. During Dianne's tenure as our local President, many changes occurred. We were faced

with discourse between the National Business & Professional Women, State Business & Professional Women and our local club of Sedalia Business & Professional Women. In June of 2009, Missouri Business & Professional Women voted to break away from National. Many decisions needed to be made at our local level to decide where we wanted to be in the new structure. Dianne worked diligently getting all the information we as a local needed to determine where we wanted to be in the new structure. Her talents really shined as she collaborated to the state organization our local needs and wants. Dianne represented our club well and we feel fortunate to have had her talents during this time. Diane continues to serve on committees in our local organization and the state organization. She constantly strives to get others involved in the organization and graciously supports others through giving of her knowledge and time. She is a certified trainer of the Individual Development Program for Business and Professional Women/USA, and is the current Individual Growth Chairman for Business Women of Missouri.

## **2011 – 2012 SBW Woman of the Year**

**Nancy Grey  
Congratulations!**



The Woman of the Year for 2011-2012 is Nancy Grey. She was one of the leaders throughout our state's transition from BPW to the vital organization we are today. She has been a force in our local club by serving as president, all the offices leading up to president, and chairing several committees. Whatever job she tackles, she constantly strives to do a great job and uses her enthusiasm to encourage others to participate. She freely gives credit to others for their part in any project.

Nancy was our 2007-2008 Sedalia local president. As president, she led our club well and constantly thought of ways to increase our visibility in the community. Throughout her term, she worked tirelessly to increase membership, promote individual development, and mentoring others within our organization and in our community.

Nancy is a great leader, but she will do any job that needs to be done whether it involves shivering while stuffing tissue into our Christmas float in an unheated building or perspiring while working in the hot kitchen at the chicken dinner. She didn't let a little thing like major surgery slow her down either!

Business Women of Missouri was fortunate to have Nancy as membership chair during the struggle to continue our mission. As the liaison between the state and local clubs, she gathered and organized a multitude of suggestions and ideas. Her portion of the leadership conference was excellent and her great ideas have helped all Missouri locals build membership.

Sedalia Business Women showed confidence in Nancy by nominating her for state office with Business Women of Missouri. Her dedication to promoting Missouri women is demonstrated by her willingness to serve at the state level.

Nancy has embraced mentoring and goes above and beyond what most people would attempt. She conducted mock interviews for SFCC students so they would have a better chance of finding employment in the real world. She organized an individual development program for CASA and serves on CASA's Board of Directors.

Of all Nancy's accomplishments, the most compelling reason she deserves this award is the way she enjoys helping others succeed. Nancy wholeheartedly supports other women whether they are troubled and need CASA, are students with their future ahead of them, or women who are already established but need recognition and encouragement.

## **2010 – 2011 SBW Woman of the Year**

**Donna Heembrock**

**Congratulations!**



The Woman of the Year for 2010-2011 is Donna Heembrock.

She has been an active member of our organization since 1987. She is now serving her fourth term as Chair of the SBW Telephone Committee. While this is not an elected office it is one of the most important committees in our organization. Communication is essential to the operation of an effective organization and this lady and her callers do an excellent job of keeping everyone up-to-date with regular

meetings and special events.

She served as an elected official (Assessor) for Pettis County for many years. This position was a responsible one that required attention to multiple details and employee supervision.

Following her retirement a few years ago, her new career turned into that of a community volunteer. Where there is something good and positive going on, you will find her helping out. While we are sure there are more, the following come to mind immediately:

- Chairman of the Citizens' Traffic Advisory Committee for the City of Sedalia.
- Member of the Board of Directors for the Liberty Center Association of the Arts where she volunteers frequently
- Member of the Board of Directors of Meals on Wheels
- Member of the local Red Cross Advisory Board
- United Way volunteer
- RSVP volunteer, which covers a multitude of activities
- Volunteers annually for the Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival
- Active member of her political party

Donna's volunteerism, following a career requiring voter approval, illustrates the type of person she is. There are very few who are as willing as this lady to work for and promote activities in our community.



## **2009 – 2010 SBW Woman of the Year**

**Rhoda Moore**

**Congratulations!**



The Woman of the Year for 2009-2010 was awarded to Rhoda Moore. She is an independent, astute, local business woman who puts her heart and soul into giving and making the world a better place to live. She is family oriented while always making time for her friends and the community. She is always ready to help out and does not want to be in the spotlight. She is content to do whatever is necessary to get a job done, preferably from “not out front.” She is the person behind the scenes that will take charge and pull it together with a smile and a word of encouragement to all. She has a “Class” and “Style” all her own. She makes you happy to be around her. She sets an example of exceptional service and caring and is a mentor to others.

Rhoda Moore is active on the Scholarship and Foundation committees and is so generous decorating our tables with appropriate decorations for our meetings and also works the chicken dinners.

She was raised in Morgan County Missouri. She was one of eight children (five girls and three boys) and she attended school in Florence Missouri graduating from Stover MO. She met her Husband and married right after high school. They have three children and six grandchildren.

She and her husband Dave own Moore’s Green House, a local home-owned flower shop at 3311 Green Ridge RD Sedalia. She is involved in BPW, PEO Chapter IP, Immanuel United Church of Christ, Sorosis, Society of American Florists to name a few; but she is a “behind the scenes” silent supporter of many, many organizations which she supports monetarily as well as donations of flowers and plants.

Of all the qualifications for the award, the one that stands above the rest is her love and appreciation of people and her desire to go above and beyond to help and serve thru her business and personal expressions of caring. As Rhoda’s good friend Judy Holman says “every day she brightens lives with her gifts of flowers and personal notes. She and her husband take care of many areas in Sedalia thru their business but every day she is doing and doing for others – all things that go way beyond what would normally be expected.”

Rhonda sets a good example in the way she dresses – always festive, colorful and yet very classy looking. Her purses and accessories match the way she carries herself with that happy, self-assured and caring attitude that she has. She makes this a more beautiful place by the way she decorates and helps others. She is pure heart and soul with a great sense of purpose both for self, family, friends and the community.

## **2008 – 2009 SBW Woman of the Year**

### **Janice Cones Congratulations!**



On October 19, 2008, Janice Cones was recognized as Sedalia BPW woman of the year.

The lady we are honoring this morning as Woman of the Year joined our local June, 1997. Janice Cones says that BPW is “something I do for me.” Yes, she does it to gain friendships and to have mentoring and leadership opportunities. She has participated in many activities and conferences at the local, regional, and state levels as well as attended one National BPW conference.

Janice has given much back to the organization by co-chairing the Public Relations and Music committees and by being active on all committees on which she serves. She helped with the Mayor’s Civic Group activity at Katy Park, rings bells for the Salvation Army, helps with the chicken dinners, the Christmas floats and willingly serves when asked. She began on the executive committee as secretary and continued through the other offices and the respective chairmanship related to those positions and was president in 2006-2007 serving with the theme of Hearts and Hands Reaching Out.

Last year Janice served as MO/BPW Region 1 Director-Elect and currently serves as Region 1 Director. In this position she provides leadership to the 13 local organizations in the region by promoting the goals and objectives of BPW/USA and BPW/MO. She is the liaison between the local organizations and the State Federation.

Janice excels in being supportive and encouraging to new members. The year she was president she had a “sweet deal” for the new member and her sponsor. She presented each with her homemade fudge-what a deal that was! Somehow, Randy Kirby got fudge, but his name isn’t on the membership list. Have to ask him how that happens.

Janice grew up in New Mexico and attended Eastern New Mexico University. She worked for EXCEL Corp in Texas first as a meat cutter and then went into their management program as a quality control technician. While she worked there, a number of United States Department of Agricultural (USDA) inspectors encouraged (she says pushed really hard) to take the civil service test to become a USDA inspector. After becoming an inspector, then spending four more years in Texas, she received a promotion in August 1996 that brought her to Sedalia. She currently is a Consumer Safety Inspector (better known as a USDA inspector). She is the inspector-in-charge of a plant at Warrensburg and another one in Clinton where she has to be on the “kill floor” to inspect all the animals when these plants process meat. Her boss, Dr. Hay, said he is very proud to hear of this honor we are presenting.

Janice is a single mother and is very proud of her twin daughters. She is very brave allowing her daughters to play on opposing soccer teams. She says that she is teaching them to remember they are part of a team and to practice good sportsmanship as opposed to “trying to beat your

sister.” She supports her daughters, helping with Girl Scout activities and their involvement with piano and singing. They are active members of Broadway Baptist Church.

Her sister Judy Garcia and husband live in Grand Prairie, TX. Her brothers Roy and Mickey Cones live and work out of Fort Sumner, New Mexico. She has lost her parents and another brother.

Her sister Judy said, “I think she is very deserving of the award and it’s nice to know that other people think so also.”

Yes, Sedalia BPW thinks Janice Cones is very deserving of being our 2008-2009 Woman of the Year.

## **2007 – 2008 SBW Woman of the Year**

### **Linda Fisher Congratulations!**



On October 14, 2007, Linda S. Fisher was recognized as Sedalia BPW woman of the year.

Linda Fisher, our choice for 2007 Woman of the Year has been a member of BPW since December of 2005. While that may not sound like a long time, she has definitely developed a voice in our club. She is currently corresponding secretary. She serves on many committees and she serves our club as meticulously as she does with any organization she is a part of.

She actively participates in conferences and the committees she serves on and chairs. She is a member of the Red Purse Society, which supports Economic Equity for women. From this, she has used her creative mind to come up with this year's fundraiser for scholarships: the Mysterious Red Purse Raffle. This is a perfect association to what we hope to help our scholarship recipients achieve.

Linda is a graduate of Stover High School. She has also attended College of the Ozarks and received an Associate's Degree from State Fair Community College. She can be an inspiration to our scholarship recipients because she has received her Bachelor's Degree from the adult studies program through William Woods University. She managed to accomplish this while working full time and caring for her ill husband.

Linda worked for State Fair Community College in 1977. From 1978 to 1980 she worked for Walker Publishing which published the magazine *Full Cry*. In December of 1980, she started working for Central Missouri Electric Coop where she is currently Office Manager. She is a member of ACRE, which is an Action Committee for Rural Electrification, and of course, she stays on top of any legislative issues facing Rural Electric Coops. She serves her office well, she understands the issues that face working women who are trying to raise children and care for their families. She is an inspiration to those who work closely with her, though she may not realize this.

She has been a member of the Alzheimer's Association for approximately ten years. She coordinated the Sedalia Memory Walk from 1999 to 2003. She managed to take the walk from a few people and few hundred dollars raised, to over 300 walkers and over twenty-five thousand dollars raised and she accomplished this in just one year. She co-coordinated the Annual Night to Remember Dances for five years. She served on the Alzheimer's Mid-Missouri Chapter Board of Directors for six years. She co-facilitates the Sedalia Support Group, participates in Memory Day in Jefferson City, and is co-captain of "Jim's Team" in the Sedalia Memory Walk. She wrote three articles for the Mid-Missouri Chapter newsletter.

She was nominated for the Maureen Reagan Outstanding Volunteer Award in 2006. She received a Proclamation Award on the floor of the Missouri House of Representatives

in 2006 to recognize her volunteer work for the Alzheimer's Association. She is an Alzheimer's advocate who has traveled to Washington D. C. each year for the past seven years to meet with Members of Congress and participate in the Public Policy Forum.

She is well traveled and likes to vacation with her family in Estes Park, Colorado. She has lived in Stover, Versailles, Sedalia, the Hughesville area and the states of Oregon and Kansas. She was married December of 1969 in Hawaii to her husband Jim who passed away in 2005. She has seven brothers and sisters, two sons, two daughter-in-laws and four grandchildren.

She also loves to write. She won first place in the 2006 Sedalia Book and Toy Short Story Contest, an honorable mention for flash fiction in Bylines and two honorable mentions for articles in the 74th Annual Writer's Digest Contest. She has a short story in the *Echoes of the Ozarks II* and a short story and two essays in *Well Versed 2007*. She also did a guest column in the Rural Missouri and had an article printed in *Full Cry* magazine. In September at the 2007 Sedalia Memory walk she released her first publication *Alzheimer's Anthology of Unconditional Love*. She collected and edited the true 'slice of life stories' of people who have been touched by Alzheimer's disease and other similar forms of dementia.

She is also Membership Chair of the Missouri Writers' Guild and a member of the Ozarks Writer's League. She is currently working on a memoir.

As you can see, our Woman of the Year is very active in the community and many organizations. She gives of her time and resources unselfishly and she is an asset to any organization she is a part of. She is very deserving of this honor.

We are very proud to present our 2007-2008 BPW Woman of the Year Award to Linda Fisher.



### **Past Women of the Year**

2006-07 Sue Parrish	2005-06 Nancy Gordon
2004-05 Ida Shephard	2003-04 Arlene Wischmeier
2002-03 Carla Young	2001-02 LaSondra Marsch
2000-01 Henri Etta Sanders	1999-00 Lynn Hatfield
1998-99 Debbie Ulmer	1997-98 Mary “Punky” McLaughlin
1996-97 Carolyn Chamley	1995-96 Cindy Weaver
1994-95 Irene Heck	1993-94 Neva Allen
1992-93 Dorothy Rialti	1991-92 Debbie Embry Fillinger
1990-91 Della Schnakenberg	1989-90 Donna Harrison
1988-89 Karen Steele	1987-88 Doris Tippie
1986-87 Peg Ferguson	1985-86 Mary Lalla
1984-85 Frances Summers	1983-84 Betty Blackwell
1982-83 Emma Lee Miller	1981-82 Anne Hamilton
1980-81 Lorraine Jackson	1979-80 Juanita Hood