

# YWCA presents honors to female visionaries

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

More than 400 people attended the YWCA's annual Leadership Awards luncheon last Thursday. Dubbed, "Women of Vision," the annual ceremony has become a signature event for the YW.

"We've been honoring women in this community for over 20 years," commented Florence Corpening, CEO of the YWCA, which includes both the Glade Street and Gateway locations. "Companies select the women - they decide what women they want to honor within their corporation - we just get the opportunity to honor them."

Eighteen women were recognized at the luncheon, held at the Benton Convention Center this year.

"They're all women of vision; they have been productive in this community, not only on their jobs but in the community as well, and that's what we look for in celebrating women who receive this award," Corpening said. "They all have a lot of the same kind of characteristics - dedication, caring and passion."

Among those honored at Thursday's event was a close knit group of women known as the "Fab Five." Michelle Cook, Lynn Eisenberg, Sarah Holthouser, Mary Jamis and Janie Wilson came together to form The Women's Fund in 2005.

"Numerous statistics show and validate exactly why we're doing what we're doing," Wilson said. "From the domestic violence numbers to the poverty numbers to the unequal education numbers - you name it - women get the short shrift, and that's unfortunate. We're hoping to certainly make a difference."

To date, the nonprofit has awarded nearly \$150,000 in grant money to local institutions and initiatives that serve women and girls.

"I was blown away by the void in our community - so many women with so many needs," Cook commented. "We looked at the community and all of the



Dozens of local women of excellence were honored last week.

money that goes to issues, but (only) a small percentage of it was going to women and girls in our community."

The fund is a donor-advised subsidiary of the Winston-Salem Foundation. Its membership is open to any woman who wishes to join, Holthouser says.

"It recognizes that every woman is a philanthropist if she acknowledges it herself," she commented.

More than 650 women have become members so far.

"Unlike most funds, we're reaching out to our members and asking them, 'How would you spread these dollars around?'" Jamis explained. "We give them a vote and we've found that it's a very important piece of why they participate in this process."

The work has been powerful for the founders as well, Eisenberg says.

"It's been so exciting and enriching to see that women have a voice and a lot of women don't know that they have one," she commented. "Together, we're making a difference and hopefully, that will continue and we will continue to grow."



Current YWCA CEO Florence Corpening with trailblazer Martha Young, a former head of the agency.

As head of the nation's oldest educational institution for women, Dr. Susan Pauly knows a thing or two about women of vision. The Salem Academy and College president spoke at length about the many important roles women play in her keynote address. She urged those in the audience to take time out to smell

the roses. "There are hidden blessings in the crazy quilt balance of our lives," Pauly said. "Living fully in the moment can bring surprising gifts."

The YWCA is just as vital to young women now as when it was founded 100 years ago, Pauly asserts.



Susan Pauly speaks.

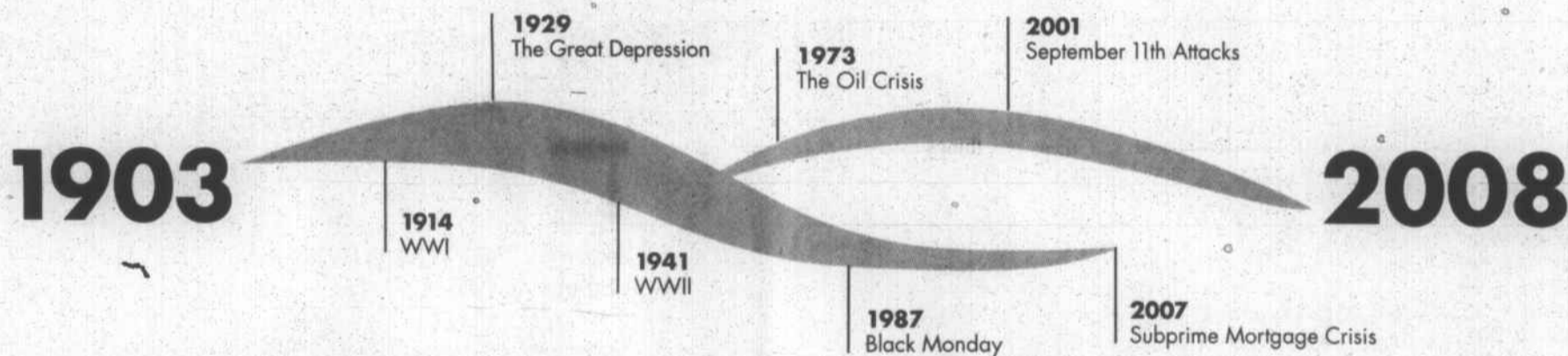
"We know this work is far from over," she said. "We can choose any category - health, education, literacy - and see we have much to do."

She praised the honorees for their dedication to the cause of helping others.

"Each of you set a unique, shining example," she pro-

claimed. "Winston-Salem can only grow stronger for women like you."

In addition to the Fab Five, 13 other women were recognized as 2008 Women of Vision. They are: Jean Adams, nominated by Womble, Carlyle, Sandrige & Rice; Betsy Annese nominated by NewBridge Bank; Simona Atkins Allen, nominated by Excalibur Direct Mail / Marketing Services; Karen Bartoletti, nominated by Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust; Dr. Sharon Covitz, nominated by Forsyth Technical Community College; Brennan Dawson, nominated by Reynolds American, Inc.; Annamarie D'Souza, nominated by Hanesbrands, Inc.; Margaret Ann Hofler, nominated by BB&T; Pam Kahl, nominated by Lois Levin; Sallye Liner, nominated by United Way of Forsyth County; Leigh McMillan, nominated by Annese Public Relations; Willette Mosby-Reynolds, nominated by Wachovia; and Marjorie Rorie, nominated by Truliant Federal Credit Union. WXII's Nicole Ducouer served as emcee and Shirley Shouse served as luncheon chair.



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