

The *Women* for FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Summer 2017



HONORING FSU'S FIRST LADIES

On the evening of April 12, 2017, First Lady Jean Thrasher hosted The Women for Florida State University at the President's House for a reception honoring the contributions First Ladies—and all women who love FSU—have made to our great institution. The President and Mrs. Thrasher greeted guests as they arrived, and stories of the selflessness and commitment of Florida State's First Ladies were shared among attendees. What a treat it was having several of FSU's former First Ladies in attendance for the celebration: Marilyn Lick, Shirley Marshall, Patsy Palmer and the State of Florida's former First Lady Donna Lou Askew.

The highlight of the evening was honoring our hostess, First Lady Jean Thrasher. Cassandra Rayne Gross, executive committee chair and a double FSU graduate, presented Mrs. Thrasher with a lovely copper owl necklace with glass beadwork made by our very own Sarah Coakley of the FSU Master Craftsman Program.

W4FSU embraces the owl, which was displayed on the seal of the West Florida Seminary from 1851 to 1901, as a symbol of the organization's commitment to honoring women's wisdom and impact. The gift was a wonderful and fitting gesture to recognize Mrs. Thrasher's involved approach. With her husband's

selection as Florida State University's 15th President, Mrs. Thrasher has enthusiastically embraced the role of First Lady and on a daily basis participates in University activities supporting faculty, students and alumni in their goals and achievements.

After the reception, guests attended the FSU Alumni Association's Circle of Gold dinner—where FSU's First Ladies would be inducted—and strolled through the First Ladies Tribute Garden, which features a reflecting pool with a particularly stunning centerpiece: a glass and metal-work rose designed to honor FSU's First Ladies. 🌹



W4FSU Chair Cassandra Rayne Gross recognizes First Lady Jean Thrasher for her dedication to FSU at the First Lady's Reception in April.



Cassandra Rayne Gross

Just like the hot and humid Southern summer, things are heating up for The Women for Florida State University! Our organization has made so much progress in the past year, and now is a perfect time to reflect on our hard work. The Philanthropy Committee restructured into a powerful force for regional outreach and philanthropic education. We coordinated our first-ever SparkFSU project during FSU's Great Give and exceeded our goal of raising \$8,000 during the 36-hour online giving campaign in support of the Women's Leadership Institute! Focus group participants organized as a working committee to investigate and tackle important questions centered on membership and giving opportunities. Our leadership pipeline grew as we added talented women from all backgrounds to lead and participate on committees. As always, our Program Planning Committee created an amazing experience in what was our ninth-annual Backstage Pass to the Very Best of FSU. And, we will host our second-annual traveling event in partnership with the FSU Alumni Association, the Inspire Awards, in Tampa.

In 2018, we enter our 10th trip around the sun together as members of W4FSU—and I know we are all on the edge of our seats to see what's next. I'm grateful to each of you for the part you play in accomplishing our mission. 🌸

Fondly,
Cassandra Rayne Gross
Chair, Executive Committee

WOMEN FOR FSU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Lynn Bertram	Julie Granger Kritz
Sarah Coakley	Annie McFarland
Stella Cottrell	Sherrill Ragans
Alicia Crew	Pat Ramsey
Cassandra Rayne Gross	Kathy Stahl
Susan Hoerbelt	Marilyn Spores

BACKSTAGE PASS 2017: FSU IS FAMILY



Participants work on crafting inspirational messages for caregivers' gift bags who participate in the College of Social Work's Operation Military Caregivers program.



Unconquered Scholars Program Director Lisa Jackson discussed how well her students perform academically and develop as leaders despite the myriad challenges they have faced in their lives.



Attendees learned the art of papermaking that serves as a transformative and therapeutic experience for student veterans returning to civilian/college life.

Attendees at this year's Backstage Pass to the Very Best of Florida State enjoyed many special and transformative experiences. One of the highlights was the presentation on poetry therapy by Dr. Nicholas Mazza, dean emeritus of the College of Social Work. For one of the exercises, participants were asked to collaboratively create a poem illustrating what The Women for FSU means to them. Women were encouraged to suggest sentences or phrases that symbolized the organization, one after another, until they felt the poem was complete.

One attendee who couldn't stop thinking about her group's poem went the extra mile when she returned home. Cynthia Schumacher, an experienced poet, has shared a wonderful gift with The Women for FSU—she created a second draft derived from the original ideas offered by her morning group No. 2. It is our pleasure to present this poem to you here:

Women for FSU

*Courageous and committed, they emerge
visionary and outstanding
with eyes wide open,
empowered to turn wonderment into reality,
able to inspire a sense of community
and connection across generations.*

*Valuing the contributions women make
to the university and ultimately to the world,
they honor what has gone before
and celebrate the future's
exciting possibilities. 🌸*

To support the programs featured at Backstage Pass, please contact:

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GIFT OF WISDOM AWARD RECIPIENT: KATEE TULLY

I like to tell people that Katee Tully was born with boxing gloves on. From an early age she understood that when things did not seem fair, she had a responsibility to set things right. This certainly was true of the playground where she observed the young men of our neighborhood dominating all the best equipment and games. She would tell them in no uncertain terms that they had to share with the girls—Title IX before Title IX. If they did not comply with her request, well, those real and imagined boxing gloves emerged. No surprise, we got to use the equipment.

My sister grew up to become an advocate for social justice on a grand level, but she walked it on a daily level as well. When she served as dean with the City University of New York, she insisted her administrative support staff, both single mothers, finish their degrees. She not only insisted on it, she helped pay their tuition until they graduated. On occasion, she would allow these women to bring their children to the office and Katee would supervise their homework activities. She would sometimes add an assignment of her own and ask them to write letters of thanks to a teacher or a letter of love to

their mother.

Katee helped start a leadership development program that benefitted young men and women in the most rural parts of North Carolina. Her success was featured on PBS, and she eventually shared a stage with Gloria Steinem and spoke about the need to support young, geographically-isolated women.

Currently, my sister serves as president of Her Florida, a new organization that focuses on issues central to women such as pay equity, school choice and reproductive rights.

Katee is also launching a young artist market in St. Petersburg, Fla., which will combine financial literacy and the creative passions of young people who don't currently have the resources to pursue them. She is a firm believer that kids should have an appreciation of the arts and the business savvy to accompany a career in the arts.

Lastly, Katee has held a deep love of FSU all of her life, as she grew up in Tallahassee. Though Katee never attended FSU, she and her wife Helen, a triple FSU graduate, have made it central to their volunteer efforts and financial support. Katee spoke recently at the



2017 Gift of Wisdom Award recipient Katee Tully

Women's Leadership Institute at Florida State. Not surprisingly, she has a fan following and has offered to mentor some of the young women who attended. These young women are joining a long legacy of other young—and not so young—women who find wisdom and grace in Katee's actions and words.

Katee prevails and shows the rest of us how to do the same. As a survivor of both 9/11 and breast cancer, my sister exhibits courage under the most unimaginable circumstances. She has been foundational to every organization and relationship she has touched. ✨

—Terri Tully Cruz

THE LONGEST TABLE AT FSU



Inam Sakinah (center between Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum and FSU President John Thrasher) was a 2015 participant in WLI and organized #PowerOfWe's The Longest Table.

Gathering to share a meal is a truly universal experience. Breaking bread is an excellent way to build relationships and communities, which was the intention of The Longest Table at FSU. Held Nov. 15, 2016, this event drew more than 150 students, faculty, staff and community members to Union Green, including FSU President John Thrasher and Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum. Inam Sakinah, chair of #PowerOfWe and a Women's Leadership Institute graduate, organized the event, which was inspired by Mayor Gillum's hosting The Longest Table for

the city of Tallahassee last September.

The #PowerOfWe is a student-led initiative, part of the Division of Student Affairs and falls under the Student Diversity and Inclusion Council Campaign that was launched under President Thrasher. According to their website, "the #PowerOfWe campaign seeks to redefine diversity and inclusion, creating meaningful dialogue and action." The concept of hosting The Longest Table at FSU seems to meet this goal perfectly. There was no set agenda for the lunchtime event—it was Sakinah's hope

that students would feel free to engage in conversations on their own terms, in an open and honest environment. "We're all contributing members of this society, and we hope that being in a place where we can engage authentically gives us a chance to have some of those difficult conversations," Sakinah explained.

After an informative and inspiring visit to the #PowerOfWe website, I found a list of hashtags including #PowerOfWe, #EngageDifference and #TranscendTolerance. Just above this list is an explanation that these are not simply buzz words, but a statement on our values as a university. "We can do more than accept differences. We can use our differences to make a difference," Sakinah said. That's a beautiful sentiment, and the #PowerOfWe is an example of which we can all be proud. Women for FSU is encouraged to see Sakinah translating what she learned at the WLI into practice by leading this effort, and we look forward to seeing their next community collaboration. ✨

The *Women* for
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION
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THE INSPIRE AWARD

Last May, The Women for FSU proudly co-sponsored *FSU Women of Distinction – NYC* in partnership with the FSU Alumni Association and the Seminole Club of NYC.

This networking event attracted more than 100 guests who mingled over wine and hors d'œuvres before a panel discussion with the four FSU women of distinction—Wendy Clark, Maura Hayes, Nancy McKay and Nada Usina. Afterward, each woman was presented the Inspire Award by

President Thrasher. The beautiful, fused-glass awards were created by our own FSU Master Craftsman Studio. The event was so successful, it will become an annual occurrence with

its next stop in Tampa this summer. Save the date for the *FSU Women of Distinction – Tampa* on July 13 at the Tampa Club. Additional details to follow soon.



2016 Women of Distinction and Inspire Award recipients

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT W4FSU.ORG