



National Council of Jewish Women Greater New Orleans Section

Bulletin

www.NCJWneworleans.org

November/December 2022

Judy Barrasso honored with NCJW's Top Award



Cathy Glaser, Madalyn Schenk, Judy Barrasso and Sara Lewis

Judy Barrasso was honored as the recipient of the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater New Orleans Section's Hannah G. Solomon (HGS) Award at an October 24th luncheon at the Audubon Tea Room.

The award is presented annually to a community leader who exemplifies the qualities of Hannah G. Solomon, founder of the National Council of Jewish Women. Recipients selected are known for their interest, activity and stands on issues with which NCJW is in sympathy. They have proven to bring about important community programs and services through their leadership in a volunteer capacity and each has been a catalyst for social change.

NCJW President Gail Pesses welcomed the nearly 150 people in attendance, recognized former HGS recipients and pointed out election flyers and the need to get out the vote.

According to Chair of HGS Committee Sara Lewis, "Just like the founder, Barrasso is a trailblazer and staunch advocate for

women's rights and civil rights in our State, and leader in the community to promote social change.

"Among the first group of women to attend law school, Barrasso has risen to the top of her profession, founding Barrasso, Usdin, Kupperman, Freeman & Sarver, where she has been consistently ranked at the top of the legal profession in the State of Louisiana as well as nationally, as a Past President of the New Orleans Bar Association, and an inductee into Tulane Law School's Hall of Fame in 2018," Lewis said.

Lewis, Cathy Glaser (Barrasso's childhood friend) and Madalyn Schenk (past recipient of the Hannah G. Solomon award), all helped to present Barrasso with the award. Letters from Governor



Past Recipients of the Hannah G. Solomon Award: Seated, left to right, Diana Lewis, Juan Gershanik, Sybil Morial and Judy Barrasso; Standing, left to right, Ina Davis, Madalyn Schenk, Ana Gershanik, Julie Schwam Harris, Susan Hess, Madeleine Landrieu, Ruth Kullman and Norma Freiberg

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Presidential MESSAGE



In a recent NYT article, "Did the Pandemic Change Your Personality? Possibly" author Christine Chung takes a look at how the Covid

pandemic has affected one of the most basic aspects of all of us, our personality. She describes a study published in the journal PLOS ONE where researchers analyzed five dimensions of personality: neuroticism, one's tolerance of stress and negative emotions; openness, defined as unconventionality and creativity; extroversion, or how outgoing a person is; agreeableness, or being "trusting and straightforward"; and conscientiousness, how responsible and organized a person is. Not surprising, the study results showed that on average, personality was altered during the pandemic.

For the last 2 years, Covid disrupted our social rituals as well as almost every area of our lives. We had to change the way we work and connect with others. The study suggests that as a result of these forced changes, key personality traits have diminished causing us to become "less extroverted, creative, agreeable and conscientious." Sounds familiar, right? For people such as so many in Louisiana, who already were apprehensive, the pandemic intensified existing anxiety. Without the ability to connect with other people and process the stresses of the pandemic together,

"Our present transition period into in-person life after what we hope was the worst of the crisis also offers an opportunity to not only reintegrate slowly, but also to reconnect with people and experiences in a more deliberate manner."

- Gail Pesses

people felt, and many continue to feel abandoned and hopeless.

Yet all is not lost. Our present transition period into in-person life after what we hope was the worst of the crisis also offers an opportunity to not only reintegrate slowly, but also to reconnect with people and experiences in a more deliberate manner. We can resume some interactions and experiences while also seeking out new sources of meaningful connections. We can choose to build new relationships and take on new challenges.

As I read all about this, I could not help but think of all the opportunities NCJW has for post-pandemic, in person, meaningful interaction. You can attend educational and social events, join a program committee, volunteer in community service programs, advocate with other section members on important issues and so much more. In this process, you have the opportunity to not only alleviate your

anxious thoughts and bolster up your fragile personality, but to form deep and lasting friendships with the people you volunteer with. And with the diversity of our programs and services, finding one that interests you is easy. This bulletin is a great place to start your search to get further involved. Inside these pages is a wealth of information about what we are doing. Contact our department vice presidents to get started. Their contact information is in the front of our directory as well as on our website. Not only will you grow and learn and reconnect, but you will be helping your brain too.

Gail Pesses

*Thank
you*

Thanks to more than 105 generous donors, we reached our Annual Personal Giving goal for 2021-2022. This year's brochure will be hitting your mailboxes soon and your support for NCJW matters now more than ever.

NCJW®

National Council of Jewish Women
Greater New Orleans Section

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Gail Pesses

Editor

Barbara Kaplinsky

VP of Administration

Judge Robin Giarrusso



Past Presidents assembled at the Annual NCJW Presidents' Cabinet in early November. Seated (left to right) are Dana Shepard, Loel Samuel, Celia Katz and Event Co-Chair Barbara Bresler. Standing (left to right) are current President Gail Pesses, Event Co-Chair Shellye Farber and Ex Officio Past President Barbara Kaplinsky.



Legacy Giving to NCJW

Through its service projects and its activism NCJW has been a significant force for good in this community. We must plan for the future in order to continue our good work. Including NCJW in your will or estate plan will mean so much for the future of our organization.

Remember that a well-planned estate makes the most of your assets, protects your loved ones, is tax smart, and is a very effective way to follow your lifelong values and create your unique legacy.

Please consider a bequest to NCJW. If you would like advice or assistance with planning your donation please contact committee chairs Susan Hess (carliesue@aol.com) or Carole Neff (cneff@sessions-law.com).

NCJW Scholarship Program and Donations

The NCJW Scholarship Program

is the oldest ongoing service of the Section. The three funds that depend on your generous donations are The Irma M. Isaacson Memorial Fund, The Clara and Roy Schwarz Memorial Book Fund and The Sara B. Stone Educational Enrichment Fund. All three funds were created to assist Jewish individuals who live in The Greater New Orleans area and who show financial need to realize their educational aspirations. When you donate to any of the funds to honor or memorialize someone you care about, you are helping to create possibilities for fellow Jewish people and it is greatly appreciated. Please send donations to: Nancy B. Timm, 5708 Garfield Street, New Orleans, LA., 70115.

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NOTE: These donations were received as of October 16, 2022



Susan Hess, Loel Samuel and Sue Singer



Administration Vice President Robin Giarrusso, 2022 Hannah G. Solomon (HGS) Recipient Judy Barrasso, HGS Committee Chair Sara Lewis and President Gail Pesses



John Bel Edwards and Congressman Troy Carter were read lauding Barrasso's work for the

State, and a proclamation on behalf of the City Council for the City of New Orleans was presented by Councilmember Joseph I. Giarrusso III.

Among the many accolades laid out in these presentations, Barrasso was acknowledged for volunteering her legal skills tirelessly for civil rights and Women's Rights. On the board of the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights, she worked to protect access to elections nationwide, ensuring that absentee ballots were respected and early voting sites were available. Barrasso also served as co-counsel in the federal redistricting effort for congressional seats. This included fighting to obtain fair districts that adequately represent minority communities and writing a pro bono amicus brief opposing gerrymandering and supporting equal representation.

Barrasso also has volunteered her legal expertise to support efforts to maintain abortion rights. In the June Medical Services, LLC v. Russo, the Supreme Court case in which the Court ruled that a Louisiana state law placing hospital-admission requirements on abortion clinics doctors was unconstitutional, Judy fought to obtain attorneys' fees on



City Council Member Joe Giarrusso presents proclamation to Judy Barrasso.

behalf of the plaintiffs. Currently, Barrasso and her firm submitted an amicus brief in the ongoing abortion litigation in Louisiana and she is working to obtain supporting evidence and affidavits from physicians and providers, who are already struggling to be able to provide medical services that their patients desperately need. In accepting the award, Barrasso applauded the many 'unlikely heroes' who won't be silenced and who won't be stopped.

"I share this award that I am so honored to receive with all of these 'unlikely heroes', the folks who refuse to be silenced during these challenging times, who risk losing their jobs, or

their customers or even their lives, to have their voices heard and to keep trying to fight for justice," Barrasso said. "I encourage lawyers and those with privilege to use their power to defend legal principles at a time of mounting peril to our democracy."

Barrasso joins an exemplary group of local community leaders who have been honored with this award including these most recent recipients: Ina Weber Davis, Madeleine Landrieu, Susan Hess, Kim Sport, Ana and Dr. Juan Gershanik, Julie Schwam Harris, Marjorie and Dr. Scott Cowen, Ruth Kullman, Mary Keller Zervigon, and Joan Berenson. Members of the NCJW HGS Committee, under the leadership of President Gail Pesses, Vice President of Administration Judge Robin Giarrusso, and Chair Sara Lewis, were Carol Newman, Allyson Page, Loel Samuel, Dana Shepard, Kathy Shepard, Sue Singer, The Honorable Miriam Waltzer and Liz Yager. The Audubon Tea Room's natural flora was supplemented by Federico's Family Florist centerpiece arrangements, and bags and Cartier perfume were gifted from Saks Fifth Avenue. Sue Singer provided delicious homemade chopped liver. The meal from Chef Alan Ehrich was made extra special with Challah and Challah knots from Maple Street Patisserie.



Past HGS Honorees Julanne Isaacson and Flo Schornstein



Barrasso Family, left to right, Harris Golden (son-in-law married to Ashley), Brent Barriere (Judy's husband), Judy Barrasso, Jennifer Barriere and Ashley Barriere (daughters) and Daniel Meyer (son in-law, married to Jennifer).



Seated, left to right: Patricia Kirschman, Barbara Greenberg, Roselle Ungar, Sherri Tarr and Loel Samuel; Back row, left to right, Dana Shepard, Kathy Shepard, Amy Gainsburgh Haspel and Judy Gainsburgh



Cindy Denn, Lis and Hugo Kahn and Carol Newman



Rabbi Katie Bauman gave the Hamotzi evoking the memory of NCJW founder, Hannah G. Solomon, who rebuked the assumption of the role of women at her time.



Seated, left to right: Elissa Bluth, Jane (Janie) Kahn, Karen Sher, Rose Sher, Laurie Diamond, Sheryl Title, Cindy Denn, Carol Newman and Ronda Kottle.



Patrice Sams-Abiodun and Simone Levine



Davida Finger and Sylvia Finger

Painting with a Purpose

The next event in the 'Knowledge is Power' series, which educates and advocates on topics surrounding cancer, mental health, and genetics, is sure to be a FUN one—with the goal being to come on out to socialize and take a MENTAL HEALTH BREAK with NCJW!

Painting with a Purpose will take place on Sunday, December 11, from 11am-2pm at Painting with a Twist (4931 W. Esplanade Ave, Suite B, Metairie, LA 70006). This event is open to all NCJW members, as well as prospective NCJW members. Cost is \$36 and, due to studio capacity limitations, the maximum number of people who can register is 40 people. So be sure to sign up early if you are interested!!



We will briefly hear from Dr. Daliah Bauer on ways to incorporate daily practices to better our mental health, enjoy brunch and libations, and then participate in an instructor-led class on how to paint a colorful floral piece of artwork.

Registration for this event is now open at [NCJWNewOrleans.org](https://www.ncjwno.org)!

NCJW Community Service Corner SilencelsViolence

The mission of SilencelsViolence is to work toward a safe and equitable New Orleans. They provide direct victim service, creative youth engagement, and public advocacy, working with clients and partners from every sector to achieve safe, just, and thriving communities.

SilencelsViolence was founded following the murders of musician Dinerral Shavers and filmmaker Helen Hill in 2006 and 2007. Dinerral and Helen were beloved friends, neighbors, and artists of New Orleans' Bywater-Marigny district.

The social workers of the SilencelsViolence Victim Allies Project arrive at every violent crime scene to provide victims and their families with grief support, emergency assistance, safe housing for witnesses, and guidance during their journey through the criminal justice system. They help grieving families navigate the police investigation process, survive and rebound from their personal loss, and access information and support as cases enter the courts. They partner with public agencies and community-based organizations, who refer victims and families to their services.

SilencelsViolence also provides arts-based violence intervention workshops for students and youth, blending therapy with creativity and directly addressing the impact of violence on young people. They amplify and activate young, creative voices toward solutions.

Recently it held a different kind of demonstration: "Paddle for Peace" designed to draw attention to the ongoing need for healing among victims of violence in New Orleans, and to raise important funding for direct victim services.

For more information, email speakup@silenceisviolence.org, Baty Landis at sblandis@longuevue.com or Carol Newman at caroln08@gmail.com.

A New Member Party/New Life Member Party: A Time to Celebrate & Rejoice

Life is filled with mind-boggling miracles! Certainly, our membership expanding by over 140 new members since 2019 is one of them! We are thrilled to greet, meet, and fete this outstanding bumper crop of new members!

We likewise celebrate our current members who in the past two years opted to become new life members.

So, on **Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at 7:00 PM**, NCJW, Greater New Orleans Section, will honor all of our new members and new life members

with a fun-filled, light-hearted party featuring a yummy dinner at the comfortable, spacious Old Metairie home of our kind and gracious member/hostess, Jane ("Janie") Kahn. It will be great to see and mingle with each other in person! Due to the sizable number of newbies, the party will be limited to new (and new life) members plus the Executive Committee and Membership Committee.

Please email Membership VP, Karen Sher, at karenandleopold@gmail.com for more information.

NCJW Learns about Art and Creates Art That Makes a Difference

NCJW members and prospective members recently had the opportunity to tour artist Hannah Chalew's Mid-City studio, to learn about the research that informs her art, and to make paper using a sustainable process. Hannah, who was recently named by Southern Arts as the 2022 Artist of the South (from nine states), creates artwork about what it means to live in a time of global warming with a collective uncertain future. Her practice explores the historical legacies that got us here to help imagine new possibilities for a livable future.

Following the tour and the explanation of how she pursues an environmentally sustainable studio practice, Hannah led a workshop on creating hand-made recycled paper. Everyone really engaged in this activity, getting a bit wet in this process, but leaving with their own hand-made mixed-media paper sheets made of environmental waste products.

Industrial Tax Exemptions Get Results for Louisiana!

A grassroots effort to rein in Louisiana's most generous corporate tax breaks brought **\$282 million in tax revenue back to local services** like **public schools, parks, police protection and other services** last year according to a recent report.

The report, authored by the think tank Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, in conjunction with Together Louisiana (TLA), a proponent of the rollback, says the state's Industrial Tax Exemption Program (ITEP) was "excessively generous" before Gov. John Bel Edwards scaled it back. The report says those changes have brought nearly \$17 billion in industrial property back onto the rolls, without sacrificing new industrial projects. In total, \$761 million in tax revenue has flowed back to local governments from 2016-2021.

This news was touted at a Statewide Conference billed *PEOPLE ON A ROLL* held October 11 in Baton Rouge. **Benay Bernstein and Barbara Kaplinsky, NCJW/Together New Orleans Liaisons**, joined faith, community and business leaders and local elected officials from across Louisiana who attended the TLA Conference.

It's Never Too Early to Learn About Voting!

When eight-year-old Louie saw his neighbor preparing registration forms for voter events sponsored by Engaging New Voices and Voters, he insisted on helping, and then asked when he could get more forms to prepare. Just like our ENVV Volunteers, he understands the importance of helping people register to vote and looks forward to being able to participate himself a few years down the road. Thank you, Louie!



Welcome to our Newest Members!

(August 19 - October 15, 2022)



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