

Distinguished Daughters of PA 2025 Incoming Class PRESS RELEASE

Governor Josh Shapiro and First Lady Lori Shapiro Recognize Eight Women as 2025 Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania

Velma A. Redmond, of Carlisle, the 26th President of the Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania, announced the new Inductees for the Distinguished Daughters Class of 2025. Governor Josh Shapiro and First Lady Lori Shapiro will recognize the eight women at this year's Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania annual luncheon at the Governor's Residence in Harrisburg on Wednesday, October 15, 2025.

"Since its inception, the Distinguished Daughters has been honoring extraordinary women for their outstanding service and contributions to our Commonwealth," said Governor Josh Shapiro. "The women we recognize bring an incredible wealth of experience and knowledge, are leaders in their respective fields, and have showcased extraordinary professionalism in all aspects of their careers. The Commonwealth is proud to claim each of the Distinguished Daughters as our own, as each of their stories reflect Pennsylvania's rich past and herald the promise of a bright future through collaborative service."

The members of the 2025 Class of Distinguished Daughters of PA are:



Marion C. Alexander

Marion Carey Alexander is a philanthropist and community volunteer whose dedication and impact have been exemplified over decades of leadership and service to nearly every major nonprofit organization in the Capital Region.

For more than 50 years, Marion has been a hands-on volunteer leading major organizations, fundraising to support vital community initiatives, and championing the arts, healthcare, and human-services organizations alike. Her fundraising experience was instrumental to the creation of the Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts and the Susquehanna Art Museum. Among the many community organizations that Marion has chaired or presided over are the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra, the United Way of the Capital Region, Hummelstown Library, Goodwill Industries of Central PA, the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg, Girls Scouts in the Heart of PA and the Whitaker Center for Science & the Arts. Her fundraising expertise has been pivotal in campaigns for the Allied Arts Fund, Central PA Humane Society, WITF, and many others. Today, she is involved in programs supporting inner city children and their struggle for a fair education that supports lifetime success.

Marion's legacy of service, leadership, and generosity has transformed countless lives and strengthened the fabric of Pennsylvania communities.



Honorable Kim Berkeley Clark

Judge Kim Berkeley Clark is a retired judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Allegheny County. A Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania native, Judge Clark earned her law degree from the Duquesne University School of Law and began her career as an Assistant District Attorney in Allegheny County. Appointed to the Court of Common Pleas in 1999, she was elected to the Court later that year and was subsequently retained in 2009 and 2019.

Judge Clark was named President Judge of the 5th Judicial District of Pennsylvania (Allegheny County) in 2018 and served in that capacity through 2023, overseeing all divisions of the Court of Common Pleas and the Magisterial District Courts. During her tenure as President Judge, she played a critical role in criminal justice reform and championed advancements in court technology, overseeing significant improvements. Judge Clark was the first African American to serve as President Judge in Allegheny County. She continues her judicial service as a Senior Judge.

Dedicating much of her judicial career to Family Law Division, primarily Juvenile Court, Judge Clark earned national recognition for transforming how courts treat children and families by creating a trauma-informed courthouse model, which has since been replicated across Pennsylvania and the nation. The recipient of numerous recognitions, in 2017, Judge Clark received the prestigious William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence from the national Center for State Courts, one of the nation's highest judicial honors.



Laura Ellsworth, J.D.

Laura Ellsworth is of Counsel at Jones Day, one of the world's largest law firms. After serving as Partner-in-Charge of the Pittsburgh Office for over a decade, she became Jones Day's first firm-wide Partner-in-Charge of Global Community Service Initiatives, spearheading the firm's rule of law initiatives around the world. This work includes the pro bono representation of clients who have been the victims of hate crimes and the development of rule of law initiatives to combat hate crimes around the world.

In the aftermath of the deadly anti-Semitic attack at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Laura co-founded and co-chaired Eradicate Hate, which is widely viewed as the most comprehensive anti-hate initiative in the world. In addition to its year-round work, Eradicate Hate's annual Global Summit brings together multi-disciplinary global experts and leaders committed to the collective pursuit of solutions to prevent hate-fueled violence of all kinds.

Laura has been an active in civic and community leader and served on the boards of many Pennsylvania businesses and professional, civic, and charitable organizations.

Laura has received the Athena, Coleman and Roddey Awards, Legal Intelligence's Lifetime Achievement Award, Best Lawyers in America Lawyer of the Year, Righteous Among Neighbors, and the Pursuer of Peace Award. She was identified by *Pittsburgh Magazine* as one of the most Powerful and Influential Women in Pennsylvania. Laura was a candidate for Governor of Pennsylvania in 2018.



LaToya Ruby Frazier

LaToya Ruby Frazier is an acclaimed contemporary artist whose practice spans a range of media, including photography, video, performance, installation art and books, and centers on the nexus of social justice, cultural change, and commentary on the American experience.

In various interconnected bodies of work, LaToya uses collaborative storytelling with the people who appear in her artwork to address topics of industrialism, rust belt revitalization, environmental justice, health care access, clean water access, workers' and human rights.

A native of Braddock, Pennsylvania, LaToya's deeply personal and community-centered approach has earned her the Carnegie Prize (2022), Honorary Doctorates from Edinboro University (2019) and Pratt Institute (2017), a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship (2015), TED Fellowship (2015), and Guggenheim Fellowship (2014).

In 2024, New York City's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) mounted an exhibition of her work entitled "LaToya Ruby Frazier: Monuments of Solidarity," surveying the full range of her practice.



Roxanna Gapstur, Ph.D., R.N.

Roxanna Gapstur is President & CEO of WellSpan Health, an integrated health system serving communities across central Pennsylvania and northern Maryland.

A nationally recognized healthcare leader, she is known for delivering exceptional healthcare through simplification, personalization, and a culture of 100% ownership. Leading a transformative effort to create innovative solutions to the biggest healthcare challenges, such as access to care, Dr. Gapstur is guiding the 23,000 team members at WellSpan Health to new levels of excellence, community benefit, safety, and economic impact. Under Dr. Gapstur's leadership, WellSpan has expanded services across central Pennsylvania, opening neighborhood hospitals in underserved communities, launching Hospital at Home and virtual care, and broadening access to specialties such as cardiology, oncology, and behavioral health.

Nationally recognized for quality and equity, WellSpan received the American Hospital Association's Quest of Quality Prize, for its advances in safety and health equity. A nurse by training and strategist by nature, Roxanna combines clinical insight with visionary leadership to build high-performing, human-centered systems that meet people where they are and help them thrive.



Katherine A. High, M.D.

Dr. Katherine A. High is a physician-scientist whose pioneering research has helped shape the field of modern gene therapy. She is Professor Emerita of Pediatrics at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, Co-Founder of Spark Therapeutics, and currently serves as CEO of RhyGaze, Inc.

Dr. High was formerly an Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), where her groundbreaking research on gene therapy for hemophilia led to pivotal discoveries about the human immune response to adeno-associated viral (AAV) vectors across various tissues. Her work was instrumental in translating gene therapy from the lab to the clinic for multiple inherited disorders.

At Spark Therapeutics, Dr. High led the development of Luxturna®, the first FDA-approved gene therapy for a genetic disease, which restored vision in patients with inherited retinal blindness. For this historic achievement, she was co-recipient of the Sanford Lorraine Cross Award for Medical Innovation in 2018. She also led the early clinical trials of Beqvez®, now approved for hemophilia B, and obtained FDA Breakthrough Therapy designation for Spark's clinical program in hemophilia A—further cementing her legacy as a leader in genetic medicine.

Dr. High has held prominent leadership roles, including serving as President of the American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy and as a member of the FDA Advisory Committee on Cell, Tissue, and Gene Therapy. Her scientific contributions have been recognized through election to the National Academy of Medicine and the National Academy of Sciences. A granddaughter of two Philadelphians, she is particularly honored to be named a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania.



Rosalind Remer, Ph.D.

Dr. Rosalind Remer is a historian, author, and cultural leader whose career has advanced Pennsylvania's cultural, educational, and journalistic institutions. Her vision and leadership have helped build or preserve several of the Commonwealth's most cherished organizations, including the National Constitution Center and The Philadelphia Inquirer.

While a tenured professor at Moravian College, Dr. Remer took leave to direct the planning and launch of the National Constitution Center, now the nation's most important institution dedicated to the U.S. Constitution. In 2004, she was named Executive Director of the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary, leading collaborative projects among five Philadelphia institutions forming the official national celebration commemorating Benjamin Franklin's 300th birthday.

As a strategic advisor, Dr. Remer strengthened organizations such as the Gettysburg Foundation and the Barnes Foundation. At Drexel University, where she currently serves as senior vice provost for libraries, collections and archives, Dr. Remer founded the Lenfest Center for Cultural Partnerships. As Chair of the Lenfest Institute for Journalism, the non-profit owner of The Philadelphia Inquirer, she has shaped its national impact and championed sustainable models for local news. She serves as vice-chair of the American Antiquarian Society's council and as a member of the board of the Independence Historical Trust. Her vision continues to strengthen, preserve, and elevate Pennsylvania's most vital institutions.



Ala Stanford, M.D.

Dr. Ala Stanford, a pioneering pediatric surgeon and public health advocate, has dedicated her career to advancing equitable healthcare and addressing disparities in access and outcomes.

Dr. Ala Stanford is a nationally celebrated public health leader, surgeon, and founder of the Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium. A practicing physician for more than 20 years, she became a national voice for health equity during the COVID-19 pandemic, founding the Consortium and directly serving more than 100,000 Philadelphians without access to testing and care.

She went on to establish and now leads the Dr. Ala Stanford Center for Health Equity to expand access to care in Philadelphia and has also served as regional director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the mid-Atlantic region. Board-certified in both pediatric and adult general surgery, Dr. Stanford is the author of the best-selling book, “Take Care of Them Like My Own: Faith, Fortitude, and a Surgeon’s Fight for Health Justice.”

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Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania was organized in 1949 to honor women who have given distinguished service through their careers to their communities, the Commonwealth and the nation. Since its founding, a total of 566 extraordinary women of Pennsylvania have been recognized for their professional and volunteer accomplishments.

Please contact Executive Assistant, Meg Ream, (m.ream@comcast.net • 717-579-5677) for any questions.

www.distinguisheddaughtersofpa.org

Distinguished Daughters is a project of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities. The official registration and financial information of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.