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**YWCA Richmond Celebrates 45 years of Women’s Leadership, Announces 2025 Class of Outstanding Women Awards Honorees**

RICHMOND, VA – YWCA Richmond is celebrating 45 years of recognizing women in leadership across the Richmond Region! While we have made strides with increased opportunities for women to earn leadership roles, learning of a “first” in many areas is still common, thus making our commitment to empowering women at all levels an ongoing priority. This year, we will not only celebrate the 2025 class of Honorees, but also the YWCA Richmond leadership who, in 1980, saw the need to acknowledge Richmond-area women who were boldly leading, making change and opening doors for other women to learn to do the same. You will also see Honorees from each decade since the 80s. We now boast OWA Honoree numbers over 300, and look forward to celebrating our newest Honorees below:

- **Arts & Culture | Elizabeth Kostelny**
  - Elizabeth recently retired from Preservation Virginian after 44 years, including 23 years as CEO. Beginning her career as an art teacher developed a spirit of education, creativity and innovation that tracked through her entire career. She most recently led Preservation Virginia’s efforts to recognize the complexity and multilayered nature of Virginia’s history and historic place, and to support descendant and Tribble communities to protect Shockoe Bottom, Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground and Pine Grove Tuskegee-Rosenwald School.
- **Business | Lisa Zajur**
  - Lisa is the Executive Director of Educational Programs for the Virginia Hispanic Foundation. Dedicated to improving the lives of those in the Hispanic community, she is a certified cultural trainer on Hispanic culture, and created the Awaken the Spanish Within® Language and Cultural Training programs. The children’s book author also developed leadership and mentoring programs for Hispanic ESL students in school and organized free dental clinics now offered through the Virginia Hispanic Foundation for children 14 years and younger.
- **Education | Hollee Freeman**
  - Dr. Freeman is an award-winning and nationally certified educator who has worked for over three decades in K-12 schools, at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as in educational administration. She has shared her work around creating space for learning in STEM contexts as a TEDxRVA and Creative Mornings RVA speaker, in addition to a

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host of other venues. Dr. Freeman is also a filmmaker, beekeeper and radio host who uses her creative and professional endeavors to create space and cultivate learning experiences for adults and students locally, nationally and internationally

- **Human Relations & Faith in Action | Danita Rountree Green**
  - Danita Rountree Green is a visionary author, and transformational storyteller who uses the power of narrative to inspire faith-driven action and promote healing. Guided by her unwavering belief in the redemptive power of language, she co-founded and serves as Executive Director of Coming Together Virginia (CTVA). A published author, Danita also partners with faith communities across Richmond, equipping them to engage in the sacred work of truth-telling, learning, and dismantling systemic racism.
  
- **Health & Science | Wendy Kreuter**
  - Wendy is the CEO of Jewish Family Services (JFS). Her career and JFS are led by the guiding value of Tikkun Olam - “Repairing the world by acts of kindness and service, one person at a time.” Through partnerships and innovative programs that highlight the value of care aides and services for older adults, finding loving homes for children in foster care, resettling Ukrainians seeking safety from war, and providing compassionate counseling for people of all ages, Wendy and the JFS staff work to transform lives and strengthen the Richmond community.
  
- **Law & Government | Janet Kelly**
  - The Honorable Janet Kelly currently serves as Virginia’s Secretary of Health and Human Resources. As a result of her family’s personal adoption journey, she launched "Virginia Adopts: Campaign for 1,000." This initiative matched 1,041 children with adoptive families by the last year of the Administration. She served on numerous child welfare-related boards and advisory committees. Secretary Kelly also served in public sector roles as Chief of Staff in the Office of the Attorney General, Press Secretary on Capitol Hill, and Legislative Assistant in the Virginia House of Delegates.
  
- **Marketing & Media | Jayme Swain**
  - Jayme is President and CEO of VPM, Virginia’s home for public media, and the Virginia Foundation for Public Media. In her role, she oversees a network of PBS and NPR stations across Central Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley that connects nearly two million people to programming in arts and culture, history, science, news and education. A media executive with over 25 years of experience in broadcast, print and digital, Jayme is currently leading the construction of VPM’s new headquarters in downtown Richmond, which will open to the public in 2026.
  
- **Nonprofit Management | Beth Van Turnbull**

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- Beth is the Executive Director at Housing Families First, leading a team that helps families resolve their homelessness through crisis response, community housing, and youth housing programs. With over 27 years of experience as an executive director, she has led Housing Families First as it upgraded its family shelter and significantly expanded its programming through a successful capital campaign. Beth also balances service on various boards.
- Volunteerism | **Eleanor Goode**
  - As a long-time children’s health volunteer, Eleanor used her passion and commitment to addressing the need for a consolidated, full-service children’s hospital to help bring the Children’s Hospital of Richmond’s Children’s Tower located in downtown Richmond to fruition in April 2023. Previously housed in the same facilities as adult care on VCU Medical Center’s campus, the new tower gives children and families their own environment with access to world-class care, dedicated parking and amenities like playrooms, teens lounges, multifaith chapel and more. Her newest goal is to meet future needs, including mental health care to advanced surgical services and enhanced research capabilities.

CEO of YWCA Richmond, Rupa Murthy is honored to celebrate this year’s class of leaders. “We know from the generations of leaders that came before us, that there are moments where one must decide to stay silent or stand up. Join YWCA Richmond as we lean into the strength that women bring to leadership as we work to unlock the full potential of the next generation. The leadership these nine women exemplify goes far beyond the matter of parity; they are catalysts for progress, innovation, and positive change.”

The honorees will be formally recognized at the Outstanding Women Awards Luncheon, at **11:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 8, 2025**, at the Greater Richmond Convention Center and is presented by Dominion Energy and Altria.

In 2024, YWCA Richmond welcomed more than 660 guests to honor the extraordinary achievements of women who lead in the Richmond region. To see highlights from these events or purchase tickets, tables or corporate sponsorships to celebrate the 2025 Outstanding Women Awards, please visit [www.ywcarichmond.org/owa](http://www.ywcarichmond.org/owa).

For more information about the events, contact YWCA Richmond at [owa@ywcarichmond.org](mailto:owa@ywcarichmond.org). For more information about YWCA Richmond and our mission to empower women and eliminate racism, visit [www.ywcarichmond.org](http://www.ywcarichmond.org).

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