

WFWP USA HerStory Award Ceremony: Celebrating Women Peacemakers

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The graphic features a dark background with golden light streaks. At the top left, the text 'HerStory Award' is written in a large, golden, serif font. To its right, 'Celebrating Women Peacemakers' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. In the top right corner, it says 'Brought to you by Women's Federation for World Peace USA' with a green and gold globe logo below it. A horizontal golden band across the middle contains two circular portraits of women. Below the first portrait is a yellow box with the name 'CARLA J. SNYDER' and the text 'Igniter Impact Transformation LLC'. Below the second portrait is a yellow box with the name 'SHAMIKA T. ASKEW, ESQ' and the text 'Founder & Managing Attorney The Law Office of Shamika T. Askew'. To the right of the portraits is a calendar icon and the text 'Saturday MAY 11 8 PM ET / 5 PM PT'. At the bottom right, it says 'Registration: https://tinyurl.com/herstory-may'.

On May 11, 2024, the Women's Federation for World Peace USA hosted the HerStory Award Ceremony, emceed by Mrs. Natascha Phillips. She began the event by welcoming all participants and congratulating the teachers, nurses and mothers being celebrated throughout May.

Following her introduction, Mrs. Phillips welcomed WFWP USA President Kaeleigh Moffitt who highlighted the significance of the HerStory Award, sponsored by the Global Women's Peace Network, a project of WFWP. This network comprises like-minded women peace makers and leaders across the USA who are making impactful contributions to their communities in unique ways. President Moffitt emphasized that the women honored with the HerStory Award are remarkable because they have chosen to answer their calling and step up to do the work, with or without accolades. "We believe by uplifting your stories, we are also uplifted ourselves and we can create a network of women where we can empower each other to continue to do the work."

She then quoted from WFWP Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's speech in honor of Mother's Day in 2023: "What is the most loved, appreciated, and precious word in human history by men and women, young and old alike? In general, that word is mommy, mom. The most precious being, the mother, has been hidden in history. History has been dominated by men. Because of this, fighting and war have continued, and the many conflicts between religions have made it impossible for them to become one. This teaches us that men cannot create peace by themselves." President Kaeleigh emphasized that WFWP honors the unique attributes of both men and women and recognizes the need for partnership. However, through the HerStory Award, we can specifically honor the feminine voice, which is greatly needed in these times of conflict and challenge.

The first awardee Carla J. Synder, Igniter at Impact Transformation LLC, began her sharing by emphasizing, "We are here because of the building blocks in our life and although many of them might have been challenging, it is what we learn from them that is most important." Reflecting on her upbringing, she reminisced about her parents' accomplishments but noted a lack of communication at home. This impacted her adult life, leading to a marriage with similar issues of isolation and poor communication. Demonstrating immense courage, she chose to raise her children in a home where there was "freedom of conversation, support, and love." She sought advice from supportive women in her life to model this better home environment.

In discussing resilience, Carla recalled how, at 50, she developed a limp that worsened over time, leading to major surgeries including back reconstruction and hip and knee replacements. This experience humbled her, teaching her to rely on others and allowing her to contribute meaningfully to her community while ensuring she could care for herself and be present for her children. On creativity, Carla shared that "as women we need an outlet of creativity," particularly in potentially volatile situations, to resolve conflicts more amicably. Inspired by her mother's community involvement, as a young adult, Carla and two friends started a child abuse prevention foundation to address the rampant but under-discussed issue of child abuse in the country. In closing, she shared, "Say yes but strategically say yes to those things that will help you create the dreams that you want for your life and to always do so with patience and kindness."

The second awardee Attorney Shamika Askew, Founder and Managing Attorney at The Law Office of Shamika T. Askew, began her sharing by expressing heartfelt gratitude to her mother for being her source of encouragement, love and support throughout her journey. She shared that her core value of strengthening and empowering women is reflected in her commitment to mentor the younger generation of women to ensure that they do not go through the same struggles that she did.

Drawing from her personal experience, she shared that as both a divorce lawyer and a divorcee, she strives to "be the light and the voice" that reminds people that despite their challenges, it is "not the end but a beginning to a new and beautiful journey." Recalling her upbringing in a modest household, Shamika reminisced about the sacrifices her mother made to provide her with opportunities for a brighter future. There was a home filled with resilience, where hardship was met with determination and love. From her parents, Shamika inherited not just values but a way of life - one characterized by humility, service to others and an unyielding authenticity that she carries into her professional endeavors.

We congratulate these amazing ladies and are grateful for the impact that they continue to make in their respective communities.