

## Interview with Myrna Lapres: My time as WFWP Southeast Director - Reflections

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October 2020



In October 2020, WFWP Southeast Regional Director Myrna Lapres stepped down from her position and was honored with a special farewell event in Atlanta, Georgia, as she prepared to move across the country to California with her husband. Grateful for her sincere dedication to WFWP in the southeast, I decided to ask her about her experiences with WFWP these last few years.

*Question: Please introduce yourself briefly.*

My name is Myrna Lapres and I am an educator and a relationship and family coach. I became a member of WFWP back in 1992

when it was first founded in the United States, but I became more actively involved after moving to Georgia in 2015. Inspired by the various WFWP program possibilities, I became the co-chairwoman in Georgia.

*Question: What is your motivation for working with WFWP?*

I was initially inspired by WFWP's vision of women working together to establish a culture of heart and mission of empowering women to discover their unique value and bring lasting peace. Growing up, I was searching for positive women role models. Often, I didn't find them in my church or education communities. I love the focus that WFWP gives to supporting women to lead with heart, service, collaboration and integrity. When I first experienced the "Leadership of the Heart" educational curriculum, I resonated so much with the content and interactive exercises. I am truly inspired by the excellent educational programs through which we can learn and grow together.



*Question: Could you tell us how you got started as the first WFWP Southeast Regional Director?*

After having been the Georgia co-chairwoman for a couple of years, I was approached by President Angelika Selle to fill the position of WFWP Southeast Regional Director. Having the opportunity to work together with the home office staff while supporting the organization of the [national WFWP retreat](#) held in Georgia in 2018, I was really impressed with the synergy of the team and their professionalism as well as the heart that they brought to their positions. I agreed to take on the Director role because I saw the need to create more connection between the local chairwomen and the home office.

*Question: What are some of the highlights of your experience in the Southeast Region?*

One of my highlights was holding [a weekend retreat](#) in a beautiful setting near Savannah, Georgia. The WFWP Georgia chapter educational team presented the "Leadership of the Heart" curriculum and it was supplemented by a variety of meditations, qigong exercises and a Summer Solstice ceremony. The retreat

was attended by participants from five states.

Another project that I was honored to be a part of was the launching of the Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN) in the five subregions. I was amazed with the presenters and participants' passion to come together to find practical solutions to problems that often divide us and to build relationships and culture centered on peace. I helped develop the program for the final [GWPN in Washington DC](#) and I absolutely loved the ability of all the women on the team to put their egos aside and work together to bring an authentic, beautiful experience for everyone attending. GWPN gives me hope that women can play an active role in building peace in their families, communities and beyond.



*Question: What are some challenges you experienced as a director?*

I guess the biggest challenge is helping women see that this is an important organization to make a part of their life. All of us are busy and juggling a lot of different responsibilities. Recognizing how being involved with WFWP leads us towards a happier, more peaceful existence was eye-opening for me. At times, it was challenging to help others connect with this vision.

*Question: In what ways have you grown and developed through this experience?*

Learning to ask for help was big for me. I realized that just because I could do something by myself, it was much more satisfying to work together with others. One of my best experiences was working with the Georgia education team of Loretta Anderson, Celeste Koshida and myself on a series of presentations ["Heal Your Family, Heal the World."](#)

All three of us are relationship coaches trained by Hilde Wiemann of Generational Healing in Maryland. We were able to bring our coach training into the presentations. That is one of the things I love about WFWP -- the ability to connect our creativity together with the vision and make something unique and personal. We started these presentations by meeting in person, but due to Covid we did the last few on Zoom and connected to participants beyond our region.

*Question: Any advice for someone (especially a young woman) interested in working with WFWP?*

I think that finding a way to connect something that you are passionate about with the vision of WFWP makes it exciting. Check out the website and see the variety of programs and activities that are being carried out. Connect with the online programs to get a taste of the possibilities and don't be afraid to suggest a new project.

*Question: What's next for you?*

I already connected with the WFWP chairwoman in Northern California and we had a Zoom meeting. I plan to be involved with GWPN programs here and would love to collaborate with others on educational projects. Also, I am currently working on a parenting book, one of my other passions. My husband and I are really happy to be living close to most of our family again, especially my young granddaughter.