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# Newsroom

## Shining lights of Lake County

### YWCA presents Women of Achievement Awards

By **ABBY SCALF**  
Daily Herald Staff Writer

They seek racial equality, make advances in science, education and arts and make community service a priority.

Tonight, the YWCA of Lake County will honor eight women at its 27th annual Women of Achievement Awards benefit at 6 p.m. at the Lincolnshire Marriott Resort, 10 Marriott Drive. This year's recipients are Peggy Roach of Waukegan, Christine M. Lopez of Antioch, Joan Hammel of Wildwood, DeRionne P. Pollard of Lindenhurst, Katherine E. Dong of Evanston, Karen J. Jones of Gurnee, Barbara J. Martin of Ivanhoe and Lindsey E. Kurek of Barrington. The event honors outstanding women and raises money for the YWCA, which advocates help for women and families.

"Lake County is filled with such talented women," said executive director Elizabeth Forbrich.

Honored in the arts category, Hammel began her musical career when her choir director at Warren Township High School in Gurnee chose her to perform at a wedding.

Hammel, an award-winning singer, songwriter and producer, said among her career highlights were being selected to entertain troops for the holidays and performing in Las Vegas.

Hammel, who plans to record a CD with a Netherlands record company in June, also strives to educate youth about the music business.

"Many colleges offer vocal lessons and instrument classes.



**Joan Hammel, Wildwood**

- An award-winning singer, songwriter and producer who has appeared on radio and television and films.

- Was the voice behind "America" a CD with songs in memory of the Sept. 11 attacks in New York City. Proceeds went to the victims of the terrorist attacks.

- Invited by the Pentagon to entertain U.S. troops at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

- Was part of the first all-female Awards Board of the Grammy Awards Board of Chicago, serving as vice president.

- Current president of the Friends Board for the Lake County Discovery Museum, where she helped raise more than \$120,000.

#### Dr. Dorothy I. Height Racial Justice Award

**Peggy Roach, Waukegan**

- Worked with the National Council of Catholic Women in Washington, D.C., which helped connect Catholics from Chicago with Washington civil rights activists.

- Following the signing of the Civil Rights Act, she participated in Freedom Summer, the initiative to register African Americans to vote in Mississippi.

- Also worked with Dr. Dorothy I. Height to launch "Wednesdays in Mississippi," a program developed to reduce racial tension by creating a network of women from the North and South.
- Is receiving the honor posthumously. She died April 20.



But they don't have business classes that apply specifically to music," she said. "It's a big mystery to many."

Lopez, coordinator of student recruitment at Rosalind Franklin University in North Chicago, said receiving the Promise Award signifies her devotion to community service.

"It solidifies the fact that every one needs to give back to their own community," she said.

As an undergraduate student at the University of Illinois, Lopez helped develop the "Say What?" a program, where she wrote and performed skits to middle and high school students to cope with issues they encounter in school. She also co-founded one of the first national multicultural sororities.

"We felt there was a huge need to educate people how to be tolerant of different cultures," she said. "One way was through education."

She assisted Community Youth Network at its Take A Step for Kids race and will educate girls about science and technology through the YWCAs TechGYRLS program.

"I need to be who I'm saying I want to be, playing a role in who will be our leaders for tomorrow," she said.

Described as a pioneer in the civil rights movement, Roach will be honored posthumously with the Dr. Dorothy I. Height Racial Justice Award. She died April 20. Roach participated in Freedom Summer helping register blacks to vote. She also worked with Dorothy I. Height to launch "Wednesdays in Mississippi," designed to reduce

#### Public Service



**Katherine E. Dong, Evanston**

- Speech pathologist at the North Chicago VA Medical Center.

- As the North Chicago VAs Women Veterans Program manager, she developed two joint incentive projects with Naval Hospital Great Lakes.

- As a result, the combined Women's Health Programs will improve access and coordination of care for female veterans with complex gender-specific health issues.

- Program serves as a leader for women's health care within the federal system.

- Currently president of the Association of VA Speech-Language Pathologists.

racial tension by creating a network of women from the North and South.

"The light she shines is extremely bright," Forbrich said. "Young generations will be inspired by her work."

#### YWCA Young Woman of Achievement Scholarship

**Lindsey E. Kurek, Barrington**

- Senior at Lake Zurich High School
- Plans to be nurse or physical therapist.

- Was part of Good Shepherd Hospital's Future Healthcare Professional Program during her junior year of high school, one of 80 chosen for this internship.

- Has served on the student council the past three years, is involved in National Honor Society, band, tennis and the Future Business Leaders of America.



#### Science and Technology



**Karen J. Jones, Gurnee**

- Has held positions in clinical research and quality at Abbott Laboratories for 20 years.

- Currently medical devices and nutritional program manager for quality operations in the corporate regulatory and quality science division at Abbott.

- Chairwoman of the employee and leadership development committee for Abbott Women Leaders in Action, which focuses on supporting and enhancing career development.

- Assists Abbott Black Business Network Outreach Committee, whose focus is to increase the number of African-American leaders at Abbott and retain African-American talent there.

#### Promise Award



**Christine M. Lopez, Antioch**

- Coordinator of student recruitment at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science.

- While in college, she developed the "Say What?" successful drug prevention program aimed at junior and high school level students.

- Co-founder of the first national multicultural sorority which has now grown to include more than 10 chapters in five states.

- Volunteered for such organizations as Mega-bytes After-School Web Design, Minority Students in Sciences Role Model Program, Men's and Women's Illinois Wheelchair Basketball Team and Children of the Future Tutoring Program.

#### Education



**DeRionne Pollard, Lindenhurst**

- Vice president for educational affairs at the College of Lake County where she helps set the strategic direction of the college's operations.

- She is the youngest chief educational officer within the Illinois community college system.

- Developed the Center for Excellence for Teaching and Learning, involving a plan to assess student learning that is student-centered, faculty-led and supported administratively.

- Implemented the Academic Quality Improvement Project, which focuses faculty and staff on the continuous improvement of higher learning.
- She is also a strong supporter of CLC's diversity committee and a member of its Women's Center Advisory Board.

#### Through the Glass Ceiling Award

**Barbara J. Martin, Ivanhoe**

- President and chief executive officer of Vista Health and Victory Health Services.

- Within one month in her position, she negotiated a consolidation of acute care services with the Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board.

- Within four months, she signed a letter of intent with Community Health systems to position Vista Health for future growth.

- Within six months, she delivered the first monthly positive bottom line financial results for Vista Health.
- Her current executive team includes four women and one man. The majority of directors and managers at Vista Health are women.

