

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**YWCA OF OLYMPIA ANNOUNCES THEIR 2014 WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT
20th Annual Gala Honors Olympia High School Student**

(OLYMPIA, Wash.) – The words are powerful, the impact broad, the commitment unquestionable.

“She is an incredible representation of female empowerment, strength and sense of self.”

“Her professional achievements and her personal experiences have influenced so many people in our community to face the reality of racism and sexism.”

“She has held a strong belief in giving women and girls educational opportunities to step themselves out of dangerous or poverty driven situations”

“She believes in the power of education to open doors for people from all walks of life, particularly those who have lacked access to systems of power”

The YWCA of Olympia is pleased to announce their 2014 Women of Achievement:

Dr. Rhonda Coats, Racial Justice Award

Vice President for Student Services at South Puget Sound Community College, Dr. Coats is a long-time advocate for access, retention, and success for students of color and other underrepresented student groups and she led efforts to establish and maintain the SPSCC Diversity & Equity Center.

Rev. Marti Ensign

Minister and Humanitarian, Rev. Ensign has helped women locally and internationally for the last 60 years. Marti received her BA in pre-med in 1958 followed by graduate degree, was the first woman to be fully ordained as a Free Methodist Minister, and served on the task force to begin the medical program at Hope Africa University in Burundi. As a member of Soroptimist of Olympia International she implemented the Hope Africa Scholarship to help women obtain medical education.

Lynn Grotsky, LICSW

Co-founder, Board President, past volunteer Executive Director, Facilitator Consultant and Event Coordinator of Pizza Klatch. Lynn, a clinical social worker, also was one of the founders of Thurston County’s Monarch Children’s Justice and Advocacy Center where she established and directed a therapy program for abused children and their families. In 1989, she and her wife, Lisa Brodoff,

for every woman

won a landmark lesbian second parent adoption case in Washington State, paving the way for same-sex parents to legally adopt here and throughout the nation.

Dr. Leticia Nieto, Racial Justice Award

Dr. Nieto is a Psychotherapist, Certified Psychodramatist, Accredited Playback Theatre Trainer, and Anti-Oppression Educator and Author specializing in cross-cultural communication, motivation and creativity. Dr. Nieto is a Professor in the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology Program at Saint Martin's University.

Christy Peters

Currently, the Administration Chief at the Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Christy has also served as former President of Junior League of Olympia, past President of the South Sound Reading Foundation, and currently serves on the Boards of NOVA School, the Olympia Youth Chorus, and the Olympia Downtown Rotary Club.

Riana Hoagland, Young Woman of Achievement

Riana is a senior at Olympia High School, maintaining a 4.0 GPA while enrolled in rigorous AP and Honors level classes. She is a YWCA Girls Without Limits! participant and Junior Counselor. Riana plans to major in bioengineering with a possible double major in neurobiology; she is excited to embark on her journey through college and further explore the world of STEM.

Full biographies and photos are available on the agency website at:

<http://www.ywcaofolympia.org/page/meet-our-2014-women-achievement>
and

<http://www.ywcaofolympia.org/page/2014-young-woman-achievement>

Nominees were selected for their professional achievement(s), peer recognition, personal growth, demonstration and inspirational involvement in the community, and/or how she models her life in accordance with the YWCA of Olympia's mission to empower women and eliminate racism through education, advocacy, service and leadership opportunities.

The 20th Annual Women of Achievement Gala, Presented by Titus Will, will take place on **Thursday, November 6th from 5:30pm - 9:00pm at the Red Lion Hotel Forest Ballroom**. The event is open to the public and tickets (\$80) will be available by contacting the YWCA of Olympia at 352-0593 or online at www.ywcaofolympia.org under Events. Once again Titus-Will has stepped up as the Women of Achievement Gala Presenting Sponsor with WSECU and Lucky Eagle for serving as our Sustaining Sponsors.

For more information about the Women of Achievement Celebration Gala or media inquiries, please contact Cherie Reeves Sperr, Special Events & Communications Director at 352-0593 or crsperr@ywcaofolympia.org.

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