
January 2025

Subject: St. Mary's County Commission for Women Annual Report for 2024

Background: The St. Mary's County Commission for Women (CFW) was established in July 1976 as a result of legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly to address matters of specific concern to women. The St. Mary's County Commissioners appoint members.

Mission: To celebrate and support St. Mary's County women through outreach, advocacy and service to secure an equitable community for all.

Meetings and Membership: The meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 5:30 pm. Changes in the schedule are sometimes made for holidays and to accommodate the needs of the group and activities.

Elected Officers—January 2024-December 2024

Catherine Stewart Chair

Melissa Rodrigues, Vice Chair

Taylor Spencer-Davis, Secretary

CFW Membership-through December 2024

Kimberly Bannister

Kim Belvin

Samantha Bryant

Apprilla Lee

Anya Myers

Marta Kelsey*

Norma Pipkin*

Taylor Spencer-Davis

Emily Stagner

Terry Prochnow

Catherine Stewart

Melissa Rodriguez

*term ended 06/30/24-new members started in January 2025

The Commission for Women (CFW) is a very active group. The group strives to stay informed of current issues and trends and shares that information with county leaders. A priority for our members is recognizing women of St. Mary's County who make significant contributions to our County through volunteer work. The Commission continues to support the Jane Hale Sypher Scholarship through funds raised at the Annual Women's History event.

Members of the Commission for Women are community minded women and serve throughout our county in a variety of roles. Their involvement allows us to have a broad view of current efforts, successes and needs.

January 2024

January 8: Meeting

January 8: A motion was made and carried to recognize Mary Washington as the Lifetime Achievement Awardee at the Women's History Month event.

January 8: A motion was made and carried to raise the price of the ticket for the annual event to \$35. 00 per person.

February 2024

February 6: Dating Violence Prevention Proclamation

February 12: Meeting

February 8:

March 2024

March: Proclamation for Women's History Month

March 8: Shared information for Art Contest for Teen Dating Domestic Violence Prevention sponsored by the Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy.

March 18: Meeting

March: Tabled at the Women's Wellness Fair sponsored by MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.

March 23: A brunch was held on March 23rd at the University Systems of Maryland, in California, MD. The theme for 2024 was *Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*. Therefore, it was fitting that CFW members decided to honor Frances Cullison, posthumously with the Hometown Shero Award. She was the first female EMS chief in the county and served for over 50 years. Mary Washington was recognized with the Lifetime Achievement Award. She was the first member elected to serve on the Board of Education for St. Mary's County. Ms. Washington has demonstrated equity, diversity and inclusion through her actions and efforts throughout the community. Further, the group chose Dr. Meenakshi Brewster as our keynote speaker. Dr. Brewster serves as the Health Officer for St. Mary's County and under her leadership, provided excellent health care guidance for the community. At this event, there were six Tomorrow's Women nominees, with twelve Women of the Year nominees. We provided a gift bag to all awardees with informational resource materials, along with a few trinkets to remember such an outstanding event. The winners were recognized with a trophy. We received much positive feedback about the event and donated the proceeds to the Jane Hale Sypher Scholarship Fund at the College of Southern Maryland. Thank you notes were given to Jane Hale Sypher, Grace and Richard Fuller, Mary Washington, Dr. Brewster, and Dr. Watson. Prepared thank you letters were mailed to sponsors.

April 2024

April 15: Meeting

April 15: A motion was made and carried to order giveaways, which consisted of 100 bags and 150 memo pads from 4Imprint,

April: Tabled at Take back the night at St. Mary's College of Maryland

May 2024

May 2: Commissions and Board training provided by the County's Legal Department.

May 10: Presentation of the check for the amount of \$2,705.00 from proceeds of the Women's History event to the College of Southern Maryland Foundation, Jane Hale Sypher Scholarship during the County Commissioners' Meeting.

May 20: Meeting

June 2024

June 17: Meeting

June 17: A motion was made and carried to give \$1500 scholarships to three separate CSM applicants and then roll over the extra funds to the endowment for the coming academic year.

July 2024

July: No formal meeting

July 16: Due Date for officer(s) nominations and/or approval of the current slate.

July 28: VITA meeting

July 31: Team Building

August 2024

August 19: New Member Orientation/Planning Discussion-Olive Garden Restaurant

August 27: Women's Equality Day Proclamation

September 2024

September 18: Meeting.

September 29: We provided an educational information table and participated in the St. Mary's County Health Department Annual Meeting.

October 2024

October 1: Domestic Violence Awareness Month Proclamation.

October 21: Meeting

October 21: A motion was made and carried to order eyeglasses cleaning cloths with leftover funds.

October 21: Announcement was made for the 2025 Women's History Month Theme,

October 23: The play, "Why Don't They Just Leave", (a phrase often heard when the topic of domestic violence comes up) was held at the Lexington Park Library. The format was a short skit followed by a panel of staff working in the field to help the audience understand the unique challenges of a person living in domestic violence situations. This event was sponsored by the Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy, the Family Violence Coordinating Council, the Commission for Women and supported by VITA members.

November 2024

November 18: Meeting

November 18: Guest Speaker at the meeting was Cora Clancy, speaking about a situation at her school, along with her mother, Jennifer Clancy, former member of Charles County CFW.

November 21: Email vote for Dr. Yolanda Wilson or Dr. Tuajuanda Jordan as the guest speakers for 2025 event, along with confirming the vote for Charlottis Woodley as the Hometown Shero.

November 22: Email went to members with voting information to select a venue for 2025 event.

November 23: MLAW Conference=14 bills presented, 6-8 will make up 2025 agenda, voting ended on December 20. MLAW Membership - Individual \$40; Organization \$75

December 2024

December 14: Meeting

December 16 Delivered gifts to the Office on Aging's Garvey Center for 10 seniors in the Guardianship Program. The gifts were purchased by the generous members of the Commission for Women.

December 17: Received email acceptance from Charlottis Woodley as Hometown Shero for 2025 event

Looking forward: We will continue to advocate for procedures, programs and legislation for women's equality. We will offer a forum to discuss local issues relevant to St Mary's County women. Finally, we are committed to our mission, to building partnerships and strengthening our community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Catherine Stewart
Chair