



# The Women's Conference®

*The Nation's Premier Forum for Women*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Oprah Winfrey, The Honorable Sandra Day O'Connor, Oral Lee Brown, Carolyn Blashek and Sister Terry Dodge To Be Honored With Minerva Awards® by California First Lady Maria Shriver at The Women's Conference 2010**

**LOS ANGELES (June 2, 2010)** – California First Lady Maria Shriver announced today the recipients of the 2010 Minerva Awards, continuing her tradition of honoring the year's most remarkable women and highlighting their extraordinary legacies of service and contributions to California, the nation and the world. Created by Shriver in 2004, The Minerva Awards have become the country's most prestigious awards given to women "who serve on the frontlines of humanity."

The 2010 Minerva Awards will be presented to the following five women:

- **Carolyn Blashek** – Founder of Operation Gratitude, the largest military support organization sending care packages to deployed soldiers in U.S. history;
- **Oral Lee Brown** – Founder of the Oral Lee Brown Foundation, which provides educational assistance and financial scholarships to school children, and which has sent almost 200 of Oakland's most at risk youth to college;
- **Sister Terry Dodge** – Executive director of Crossroads, Inc., which provides transitional housing, education, career and counseling services and support to women released from prison;
- **The Honorable Sandra Day O'Connor** – First woman Associate Supreme Court Justice, and founder of Ourcourts.org, a web-based education program designed to teach students civics and inspire them to become active participants in our democracy; and
- **Oprah Winfrey** – Founder of the Oprah Angel Network, the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa, and a source of education, inspiration and empowerment for women and girls throughout the world.

"This year's Minerva Award honorees are women who live with a deep sense of purpose and who are passionately dedicated to serving others," said Maria Shriver. "These Minervas all identified problems and unmet needs in their communities and have worked tirelessly to solve them. By honoring them, we hope to inspire others to be Architects of Change just like them."

Shriver will personally present the honorees with their awards at a special ceremony with 14,000 attendees during the afternoon session of The Women's Conference at the Long Beach Convention Center on Tuesday, October 26, 2010.

Named for the Roman goddess Minerva who graces the California State Seal, the awards annually honor remarkable women who, in the spirit of Minerva, changed California and the nation with their courage, wisdom and strength. Minerva Award recipients have made extraordinary contributions in the areas of the Arts, Health and Sciences, Community Activism, Human Rights, Business and

Technology, Motherhood, Innovation, Education and Finance. The Minerva Award winners also receive \$25,000 grants from the conference to further their work.

Previous Minerva Award recipients **Dr. Sally Ride** and **Marilyn Hamilton** joined Shriver in congratulating this year's honorees.

"Sincere congratulations to the amazing women honored by this year's Minerva Award," said 2006 Minerva Award recipient Dr. Sally Ride. "Through their tireless efforts and innovative solutions, they have impacted numerous lives and will continue to inspire future generations for years to come."

"I am thrilled to see yet another group of inspiring, courageous women honored with the Minerva Award, and I wholeheartedly congratulate them on their extraordinary accomplishments to make California and the world more caring, tolerant and just," said 2006 Minerva Award recipient Marilyn Hamilton. "Their wisdom, strength and compassion have touched millions of lives – including mine – and I am honored and humbled to be associated with them."

Shriver is also joined again this year by **Target**, which is partnering with The Women's Conference to present The Minerva Awards ceremony for the seventh consecutive year.

"Target is proud to continue its support of the Minerva Awards and celebrate the contributions of these five amazing women," said Laysha Ward, President, Community Relations, Target. "By honoring their outstanding accomplishments and sharing their stories, we hope to instill a passion of life-long learning and empower all women to be strong and dynamic leaders."

For the second straight year, The Women's Conference organization invited the public to participate in its Minerva Award research through an online recommendation process on its Web site. This year's honorees were selected from a pool of more than 1,000 candidates, 200 of which originated from the on-line recommendation process. The pool of candidates were vetted and narrowed down by a conference research team. Shriver then selected the honorees from a list of 20 finalists.

Past Minerva Award recipients have included **Betty Chinn ('08)**, former First Lady **Betty Ford ('05)**, Olympian **Anita de Frantz ('05)**, **Dr. Jane Goodall ('09)**, **Marilyn Hamilton ('06)**, **Billie Jean King ('08)**, family literacy pioneer **Sister Jennie Lechtenberg ('05)**, The Honorable **Nancy Pelosi ('07)**, **Dr. Sally Ride ('06)**, **Eunice Kennedy Shriver ('07)**, **Gloria Steinem ('08)** and **Agnes Stevens ('09)**.

The achievements of Minerva Award winners are chronicled in a permanent, conference-funded exhibit at The California Museum for History, Women and the Arts in Sacramento, and have become part of California's official archive. For more information on The California Museum, visit: <http://californiamuseum.org>.

Again this year, conference organizers will be reconfiguring floor seating in the Long Beach Convention Center's main arena to expand capacity and offer a separately-ticketed event for The Minerva Awards ceremony. A limited number of \$50 tickets for the afternoon ceremony will go on sale at the same time as all other conference events, on Wednesday, June 23 at 9:00 a.m. PDT. The Minerva Awards ceremony will also be broadcast live at WomensConference.org, beginning at 5:00 p.m. PDT on October 26.

### **About The Women's Conference**

The Mission of The Women's Conference Organization is to create Architects of Change® – people from all walks of life who see a problem and seek to create the solution, be it in their home, their

community, their state or our world. Led California First Lady Maria Shriver, The Women's Conference has created a global community of Architects of Change who gather every year at the nation's premier forum for women in Long Beach, CA. More than 30,000 women attend the two-day nonpartisan conference and many thousands more watch the event live online. WomensConference.org — the Home for Architects of Change — has become a thriving online community of more than one million women who visit the site to be empowered with daily editorial and video content, inspirational conversations and stories, and life-changing tips, tools and resources. The Women's Conference has formed strategic partnerships with established organizations to create lasting change through six far-reaching programs – WE Educate, WE Invest, WE Connect, WE Act, WE Inspire and WE Honor. Through these programs, The Women's Conference community works together 24/7 on the front-lines of humanity to finance dreams and invest in entrepreneurs, lift people out of poverty, help end the cycle of violence, send young women to college, build community centers, playgrounds and gardens, honor courage, wisdom and strength, and inspire people by the remarkable history of their state. For more information about The Women's Conference, visit: <http://www.womensconference.org>.

The Women's Conference 2010 is supported by generous sponsors that share its mission of empowering, inspiring and educating women. Many of our sponsors have been with us for all seven years under Shriver's leadership, including Safeway, who returns as a Conference Presenting Sponsor and Target, who returns as The Minerva Awards Presenting Sponsor. Lean Cuisine returns as a Night at The Village Presenting Sponsor, and the Shinnyo-en Foundation returns to present A Day of Health, Wellness and Transformation. New sponsor Kodak will also join the Conference this year as a Presenting Sponsor.

#### **About Target**

Minneapolis-based Target Corporation (NYSE:TGT) serves guests at 1,740 stores in 49 states nationwide and at Target.com. Target is committed to providing a fun and convenient shopping experience with access to unique and highly differentiated products at affordable prices. Since 1946, the corporation has given 5 percent of its income through community grants and programs like Take Charge of Education. Today, that giving equals more than \$3 million a week.

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**Editor's Note: Press registration will open on Thursday, June 17 at 9:00 a.m. PDT at <http://www.womensconference.org>. Press must register for a credential to cover any conference event.**