

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 18, 2011

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## Recipients Announced for 2011 YW Tribute to Women

BRISTOL, Tenn. —YWCA's 20th annual Tribute to Women Steering Committee is proud to announce this year's recipients. This unique program empowers women by providing corporations, organizations and businesses the opportunity to publicly recognize the outstanding achievements of exceptional women in East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. Every day in the Tri-Cities, our communities are supported and strengthened by women devoted to enriching the quality of life for others.

Celebrating a 20-year tradition, the YWCA proudly honors these individuals and their many contributions to the artistic, cultural, educational and charitable facets of our community. The YWCA is pleased to name 12 women from the Tri-Cities area as 2011 YW Tribute to Women honorees. A special panel of out-of-state judges considered nominees from the fields of art, education, business and community service. This year's recipients are listed below.

### Arts



***Barbara Brown Jernigan***

Barbara Brown Jernigan is not just outstanding because she's an active teacher of and participant in the arts - to quote her nominator, it is her "unbound compassion she has for those who struggle in art and life." She has shared her knowledge of the arts by participating in the Watauga Valley Art League, Kingsport Art Guild and Tennessee Watercolor Society, and also organized her art classes to paint cards for elderly shut-ins at Christmas. Guided by a love for the difficult medium of watercolor paint, Barbara has dedicated her life to honoring the lives of others, whether it is teaching them to use art to express pain and difficulty, or promoting the works of other artists to raise money to support arts in the schools.



***Leah Ross***

A tenacious ambassador for Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion and the arts, Leah Ross has earned a reputation as a leader and visionary. During her tenure as Executive Director, Leah has helped grow Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion into a world-class festival re-igniting the enthusiasm for our Appalachian sound in Bristol and beyond. With Leah at the helm, BRRR has received the Shining Example Award for Festival of the Year, the Virgo Award for Best Destination Event of the Year and the Pinnacle Award for Special Events in the Cultural Arts Division. Leah has worked tirelessly to promote our musical heritage, to persuade legislatures to fund the arts and to encourage economic development through cultural heritage ventures and initiatives.



***Cindy Saadeh***

"Inspiring", "dedicated", "outstanding", and "generous" are only some of the words used to describe Cindy Saadeh, an artist in Kingsport who has been a key component in the growth of the arts community there. A supporter of the revitalization of the downtown Kingsport, Cindy's enthusiasm and leadership has not only opened the doors for many local and regional artists but has also helped with the growth and education of the visual arts in her community. While Cindy's work has been shown and sold all over the Southeast, her legacy will be most impacted by her gift of sharing vision and the desire for others to succeed as well.

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## Business & Professional



### ***Lorrie Quinn Cooper***

Lorrie Quinn Cooper's professional career began upon her graduation from Virginia Tech in Mechanical Engineering. Since 1995, Lorrie has worked for AGC Glass Company, where she currently holds the position of Director of Purchasing. As testament to her leadership skills, charisma, work ethic and visionary thinking, Lorrie serves on AGC's Leadership Team with responsibility for community relations. During the current challenging business climate Lorrie has been a strong voice of leadership, encouraging excellence to strengthen her company's position in the global market. Lorrie also gives back to the community through her volunteer efforts with the Kingsport Chamber of Commerce, Kingsport Tomorrow, Kingsport Convention & Visitors Bureau, Friends of Allandale, Junior League, and many others.



### ***Sandy J. Ratliff***

Dedication to entrepreneur and small business development has been a constant on Sandy Ratliff's professional path. As the Business Services Manager for the Southwest office of the Virginia Department of Business Assistance, she has been responsible for the successful design and implementation of several programs geared towards new business growth. Her common sense approach, specialized knowledge in her field and creative insight toward solutions has led to the collaborative involvement of nearly 20 organizations and agencies within Southwest Virginia. Her considerable accomplishments can be tallied on a state wide scale, but her most important contribution has been her direct effect on Southwest Virginia residents by improving individual livelihoods and community sustainability by broadening small business and local employment opportunities.



### ***Annemarie Witmer, P.N.P.***

Annemarie Witmer has dedicated her life's work to helping others. She began in the nursing field at 18, and has continued to evolve through increased responsibility as well as continued education. Even now with a daughter she inspired in Medical School, she continues to aspire for more by seeking her PHD in Nursing. While her competency and attention to detail is noteworthy, it is her compassion and sensitivity that sets her apart. As a Nurse Practitioner at Jimmy Quillen Veterans Hospital she encourages her patients by taking into account not just their physical well being but their emotional health as well. Likened to Florence Nightingale she goes the extra mile, making a difference in the life of each patient she meets.

## Education



### ***Melanie Lynn Crain***

Melanie Lynn Crain is a true teacher at heart. Although she had always dreamed of becoming a teacher, she put her aspirations on hold for her family. Later, as she worked full-time at an insurance agency, Melanie attended Virginia Intermont College and obtained a teaching degree for Elementary Education. Since then, she has excelled as an elementary school teacher and lifetime learner. She has represented her school system at numerous education workshops and training programs across the region, and has even presented "Planning and Teaching Sixth Grade Students" to Education scholars at Milligan College. Among her other recognitions, in 2010 she was named Outstanding Teacher by the Rotary Club of Bristol TN/VA.

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**every woman**  **yw tribute to women**  
**deserves a tribute**



**Dr. Amber Kinser**

As an educator who over her tenure has demonstrated determined leadership, Amber Kinser is responsible for building the ETSU Women's Studies Program. She is a celebrated, nationally-known author, consultant and keynote speaker and has published two books, 20 essays and articles, and presented at over 50 workshops, conferences and invitational events. Most recently, Amber was selected by her peers to lead them as the new Department of Communications Chair at ETSU. For over two decades, Amber has promoted feminist leadership and critical thinking and has been tirelessly devoted to teaching students how to end social injustice.



**Cynthia P. Timp**

Cindy Timp is a ground-breaking educator in the field of special education in the Washington County, Virginia school system. She is also the founder of a non-profit disabilities foundation that helps families with severely disabled children facing financial and emotional difficulties. Cindy's development of a successful "model inclusive classroom" for special needs children at High Point Elementary School drew the attention of the Training and Technical Assistance Center at Virginia Tech. T-TAC began requesting that Cindy and the preschool team present at state conferences in order to help teachers around the state achieve greater results for their own special needs students. Cindy has changed the landscape of special education in Washington County as well as nurtured families and special needs children who need support.

### **Volunteer/Community Service**



**June Barrett**

June Barrett is the definition of a strong, determined woman. Having overcome her own cancer and a car accident which left her daughter with a traumatic brain injury, she successfully managed a thriving career in real estate, all while caring for her elderly father. Mrs. Barrett eventually gave up her career to found The Crumley House, a non-profit rehabilitation center for patients with brain injuries. In 2001, it moved to a residential center and now offers day treatment to these patients with help from ETSU, Milligan and Tusculum. June continues to advocate legislation in favor of patients with brain injuries, lobby both Congress and Medicare on behalf of these patients, and raise funds for The Crumley House.



**Mary Cunningham**

In addition to being a wife, mother and grandmother, Mary Cunningham has been an active volunteer in the Tri-Cities for over 50 years. Her selfless and caring heart has been displayed in over 36 years of service with Meals on Wheels. She is a part of all functions of the organization— preparing meals, processing recipient applications, recruiting and training volunteers, organizing the delivery routes, and delivering meals herself. During her time with Meals on Wheels, she has had a hand in cooking or delivering over 1 million meals. In addition to her service to there, she has devoted time to the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, Bays Mountain Park, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Kingsport Community Band, to name just a few.



**Ann K. Holler**

Ann K. Holler has vastly contributed to developing arts programs that serve this community. As an educator, she is one of the most respected piano instructors in the area, teaching several advanced music classes at King College in Bristol, TN. She has been the Appalachian Music Teachers Association's "Teacher of the Year" and "Composer of the Year." In addition, she also established the Art Alliance Mountain Empire. By 2003, AAME had become the incorporated organization that would bolster the revival of *A! Magazine for the Arts*. Ann's leadership of this endeavor, as well as extensive time spent collaborating with other volunteers developing both the organization and publication, has proven to be an irreplaceable asset to our region.

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### **Tribute to Women Awards Banquet**

Award recipients will be honored during the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Tribute to Women celebration on Thursday, April 28, at 6 p.m. Tickets to the banquet, which will be hosted by Brenda White Wright, are on sale for \$100 per person. Support of the YWCA through Tribute to Women directly affects women, children and families in this region as the YWCA tackles the toughest community issues, which include affordable childcare, racial justice, teen pregnancy, youth development, technology education and more.

For more information, visit [www.ywcabristol.org](http://www.ywcabristol.org), or contact the YWCA at (423) 968-9444 or via e-mail at [ywca@ywcabristol.org](mailto:ywca@ywcabristol.org).

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