

**Business and Professional Women/Louisiana
2001-2002 History
Louisiana Federation of Business & Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.**

Using "Communication is the Key" as the theme, the history for 2001-2002 began when Fran Graham and Sharon Wiber, BPW/Kansas members, installed President Linda Dreier and her team of elected officers and appointees Saturday, June 9, 2001, in the Grand Ballroom of the Ramada Inn, Slidell, Louisiana following dinner and music by the Northshore High School Jazz Band. Officers elected to serve with President Dreier included Pat Moses, President Elect; Linda Burns, First Vice President/Issues Management and Legislation Chairman; Camille Moran, Second Vice President/Membership Chairman; Cynthia Edwards, Recording Secretary; and Anne Storms, Treasurer.

Standing committee chairmen named included: Nominations, Glenda Prechac; Bylaws, Corvette Kowalski; Finance, Janis Guyton; Foundation, Angie Davis; Public Relations; Young Careerist, Sheila Goodson; Individual Development, Paula Hope.

Named to fill special appointments were: Parliamentarian Francis Jakes; *Pelican* Editor Rhonda Counselman; *National Business Women's Week* Chair, Doris Sanders; Corresponding Secretary, Angie Wilson; Auditor, Betty Bellina; Agnes Morris Educational Loan Fund Custodian and Louisiana Education Foundation, Linda Burns; Mid-Year Conference, Linda Dreier; Nike Chair, Pat Thomas; State Convention Chair, Doris Sanders; with co-chairs Camille Moran and Alice Barrios; Historian, Iona Myers; Scrapbook, Rhonda Counselman; Chaplain, Lois Ferguson; Legal Advisor, Deanna Hamilton; Rules and Resolutions, Kathryn Nizer; Foundation Scholarship Alumnae, Alice Barrios.

Board members included past presidents Corvette Kowalski, Doris Sanders, and Alice Barrios, as well as the District Directors: for Southwest/Central Doris Sanders and Angie Davis; for Southeast Deborah Keller; and Northwest/Northeast Shirley Horner.

The detailed Board Book including the state directory, compiled by Linda Dreier, was distributed at the Post Convention Board of Directors meeting, Sunday, June 10, 2001. All of the above elected and appointed officers, plus these Local Organization Presidents comprised the Board of Directors: Wanda Ishmael, Donaldsonville; Iona Myers, Jefferson Parish; Mary Graham-Smith, Lafitte; Cynthia Edwards, New Orleans; Lois Hueschen, St. Bernard; Deanna Hamilton, Slidell; Laurie Bartley, Westside of Gretna; Weggie Levet-Petrie, W. St. Tammany; Marie Lawrence, Alexandria; Melissa Bryan, DeRidder; Melissa Northcutt, Lake Charles; Sharon Sampite, Natchitoches; Phyllis Callahan, Oakdale; Rickie Lindzay, Bastrop; Angie Wilson, Monroe/W. Monroe; with no listing of president for Ruston.

The president attended the BPW/USA Board Meeting and Conference in Portland, Oregon, July 12-17. She hosted the Mardi Gras themed party for national board members in her hotel suite, assuring attendees that BPW/Louisiana welcomed them to New Orleans for the 2002 National Conference. Twelve BPW LA members attended the Conference, including Corvette Kowalski, Pat Moses, Linda Burns, Camille Moran, Anne Storms, Deirdre Carey Brown, Frances Jakes, Lois Hueschen, Glenda Prechac, Martha Gremillion, and Iona Myers.

August 24-25 President Dreier attended the New Orleans Mayor's Conference for Women, where she networked with speakers and leaders present. She assisted at the BPW booths promoting membership, where hundreds of BPW/USA membership brochures were distributed. Later in the year, at the invitation of Congressman Vitter of Metairie, she attended the National Women's

Leadership Summit in Washington, DC, May 13-14, 2002 hosted by U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson. Dreier summarized in her Annual Report at the 83rd Annual Conference: "Attendees met in the Russell Caucus Room the first evening where Senate Republican Leader Trent Lott spoke. After the Reception the Louisiana delegation went to dinner hosted by Rep. Vitter. Tuesday was a day full of speakers and it was fantastic. Every woman cabinet member spoke to us. The Honorable Lynne Cheney was the Keynote Speaker during our luncheon. It was a great day and I was able to meet many women and network about issues that face all of us."

President Dreier was the State Representative to the Southeast District September 22 in Slidell. Pat Moses also attended this district meeting. The president also attended the Southwest /Central District meeting on October 6 in Oakdale, and was pleased to visit with Esther Terry, our great role model, a 70-year BPW member!

President Dreier took charge, making changes to bring BPW/LA into the 21st Century. Two issues of the *Pelican*, with regular newsletters, *The Leadership Update*, from the president to the board between issues, allowed changes including upgrading to heavier, slick stock for a first-class publication. The redundancy of awards criteria being distributed at the Post Convention Board and the first issue of the *Pelican* was made obsolete. The unnecessary "Pelican symbol" disappeared out of the banner without a squawk. The president's newsletters kept communication lines open to the locals and other board members. Email was used extensively to keep abreast of issues and events with those who had access to participate. Local organizations with bulletins sent them to the president, other officers and historian, including Jefferson Parish, Natchitoches, New Orleans, St. Bernard, and Slidell.

National Business Women's Week October 14-20 was celebrated in various ways. Monroe BPW had an excellent Mayoral candidate forum, well-covered by the print media, cable and network stations. Many Southeast district locals honored a Woman of the Year: Senator Paulette Irons by Jefferson Parish; Deborah Keller by St. Bernard, and Marti Livaudais by Slidell. They also had many other programs and proclamations. In the Southwest/Central District, Natchitoches honored Woman of the Year Betty Jones, Man of the Year Mark Marley, Employer of the Year Alliance Compressors, and Alice Barrios, Camille Moran, Doris Sanders, Pat Thomas and Angie Davis received the President's Award for service.

On November 9th a Mid Year Conference in Lafayette replaced the traditional Mid Year Board of Directors in Alexandria. Diane Polangin, BPW/USA Media Chair, provided training in use of the Media, and Frances Jakes provided training in parliamentary procedures. The Legislative Day moved from Spring to the day before this Mid Year Conference, with a panel of experts to present issues requiring legislative attention, including Linda Talbert, Sibal Holt, Desiree Duhon Dyess and Barbara Leach. Serving as Moderator, we were honored to have BPW/Virginia Vice President Paula Garner. Those attending the conference voted to change the three districts to two, and after the current year have only one district meeting each, annually in the spring, hoping to promote attendance at the Mid Year Conference. That evening St. Bernard produced the entertainment, a "Cajun Fais do-Do" following the Cajun Cuisine dinner.

The president attended the Policy and Action Conference, followed by BPW/USA Interim Board, February 13-16, 2002. Focusing on Pay Equity, Dreier, with National President Leslie Wilkins, visited Senators Mary Landrieu and John Breaux.

Spring District meetings were hosted by Oakdale and Westside of Gretna local organizations in March. Linda Burns was the State Representative to the Southeast District, where District Director Deborah Keller presented the program on Leadership. President Dreier presented a Leadership Training program for the Southwest/Central district.

Many meetings were held in the New Orleans area by the state committee accepting the responsibilities for the Mardi Gras Ball during National Convention, chaired by Paula Hope. Details of price, menu, dress code, date and time were coordinated with BPW/USA, with help of President Dreier. Also in preparation for hosting the National Conference in July, Corvette Kowalski, National Conference Contact Chair, stayed active making contacts for business connections and BPW/USA.

83rd Annual Conference in Natchitoches was the culmination of many planning meetings involving state officers and the convention chairs. It was held June 7-9 at the Ramada Inn in Natchitoches. National Representative was Jacque Deeds, National Bylaws Chair. President Dreier again took bold steps. On Friday the Conference included the Young Careerist competition and workshops, but omitted the usual 5 PM Opening Session, and celebrated the achievements of the Year with the Wild Women Awards Night.

Phyllis Callahan, Nike Chair, presented the highest state honor to Claire Runnels, St. Bernard. The President's Award was presented to Deanna Hamilton, Slidell President. Desiree Monique Duhon Dyess of Natchitoches won the Young Careerist Award. She will represent Louisiana at the national conference. Southeast District Director Deborah Keller won the Most Outstanding District Award presented by Pat Moses. Camille Moran presented numerous Membership Awards, with New Orleans honored for Membership Growth. Cynthia Edwards, New Orleans, received the Crown of Jewels award for 17 members recruited. Iona Myers, Jefferson Parish, with nine, was the runner-up. President Dreier presented the BPW/USA Gold Foundation Award to Jefferson Parish for contributions of \$135 per capita. She also presented them the state Best Foundation Program award. St. Bernard received honors for Best Issues Management, Legislative Project, Best Public Relations program, Best News Coverage of a Single Event, and Best NBWW Program. Slidell BPW received The Most Outstanding Local Traveling Award, and recognition for Most Outstanding Legislative Program, and applying for the New Millennium recognition award.

Saturday, breakfast meetings for interest groups began the day. With expeditious Business meetings opening at 9 AM led by Dreier, the agenda was effectively covered. Sheila Goodson, YC Chair, introduced the Young Careerist Desiree Dyess, Natchitoches, who presented her speech about Domestic Violence. Even with nominations from the floor, followed by a ballot vote, there was time to spare waiting for Rep. Diane Winston to arrive. Winston dynamically addressed the Status of Women in Louisiana as found by the work of the Women's Policy and Research Commission.

During the noon recess many members met together in The Old Pub, at the "Communication is the Key" luncheon honoring Louisiana Past State Presidents. It featured a video compiled from photos while these women were in office, plus some oral personal recollections.

The reconvened meeting completed the business agenda, including national news from Jacque Deeds. There was a repeat of a favorite recess from the last convention – an ice cream break. Ending with Courtesy Resolutions to those who made the convention happen, the 83rd annual conference adjourned, to be concluded with the evening Installation Banquet, "Rise to the Challenge", to install these officers: Pat Moses, President; Linda Burns, President Elect; Camille Moran, First Vice President; Rhonda Counselman, Second Vice President; Eva Bourdier, Recording Secretary; and, Anne Storms, Treasurer.

Iona R. Myers, Historian

Adopted as Official History by BPW/Louisiana state Conference delegates, June 2003