



FLORIDA CONFERENCE ON OBSERVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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FLORIDA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE A 'PRODUCTIVE, POSITIVE EXPERIENCE' FOR THOUSANDS

ORLANDO, FL., JULY 22-----An atmosphere of learning and sharing common problems pervaded as nearly 3,000 women gathered in earnest discussion during Florida Women's Conference for International Women's Year. Workshop sessions culminated in a package of 73 resolutions to be presented to the National Conference this November.

"We accomplished the business we set out to do," said Rep. Gwen Cherry, the presiding officer of the three-day conclave on July 15-17. "The Conference was a productive, positive experience which helped us understand the many issues on which women can agree in spite of the few areas which have caused dissension. We shared our feelings, developed new directions, passed resolutions, elected delegates and learned to work within the system to encourage the entrance of women into the mainstream of American life."

Workshops touched on every aspect of a woman's life from physical fitness for the aged to recognition of the volunteer worker. Federal officer Elizabeth Athanasakos ruled the 73 resolutions are the official statements of the Conference even though a general assembly vote was not taken for lack of a quorum. "These resolutions, since they were developed

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through the combined efforts of thousands of women in workshops during the Conference will go to the national Houston conference as being representative of the feeling of Florida women"; Judge Athanasakos stated.

Resolutions addressing a gamut of inequities faced by women from birth to old age are directed to various levels of government and governmental agencies. Federal lawmakers are encouraged to consider Florida's recent divorce law which allows a parent with custody to make a single court appearance to have child support deducted continually from the other parent's wages, rather than having to go to court each time support payments are overdue.

Another resolution states that whereas famine is an historical reoccurring event, Florida Women's Conference strongly endorses "the principal of the World Food Bank Program to store grains, fertilizer, seeds and equipment to prevent extensive famine in the future."

Concerning women's health care, the Conference urges the Florida Legislature to form a select committee to study the dangers of electroconvulsive shock treatment received chiefly by women. All women, progressive individuals and organizations are urged to protest the Hyde Amendment which takes away "the basic human rights of minority women to have safe legal abortions with the assistance of Medicaid funds" in another resolution.

A broad resolution affirming the dignity of the wife as mother, homemaker, and/or wage earner implores society to extend the benefits commensurate with her responsibilities. The role of women as volunteers is acknowledged as having an economic impact on society, one resolution says, and the Conference urges that volunteer experiences be recognized

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as qualifying credentials for both public and private employment.

Speaking to the problem of spouse abuse, child abuse and sexual assault, one resolution calls for the establishment of 24-hour shelters for victims of violence supported in part by government funding for public education, research and services, as well as increased education in preventing the occurrence of such crimes.

Other resolutions address consumer education, preparing young women for leadership roles through the public school system, adequate child care, insurance inequities, equal rights, minority representation, social security benefits for older women, and equal credit opportunity.

These 73 resolutions will be presented to the National Women's Conference in Houston November 18-21 by the 40 delegates elected at the Florida confab. Rep. Cherry announced a change in the delegate slate, as certified by the Orange County Dept. of Elections which conducted the official voting. Dr. Ellen Kimmel, of Tampa, whose name was not included on the original slate, will be a delegate. Diane M. Peterson, of Jacksonville, originally announced as the 5th alternate has been removed from the slate. A complete listing of delegates follows:

In the south Florida area: Inez Almond, Opa-Locka; Marie Anderson, Miami; Susan B. Anthony, Deerfield Beach; Donna M. Batelaan, Boynton Beach; Rita Bornstein, N. Miami Beach; Mollie Brilliant, Miami; Gwendolyn Cherry, Miami; Euphaua Frazier, Miami; Virginia C. Harlan, Miami; Dr. Maria C. Hernandez, Miami; Ellen Johnson, Miami; Dr. Emma Rembert, Miami; Maria Saiz, Boca Raton; Yvonne Santa-Maria, Miami; Carole M. Sheahan, Miami; Francena Thomas, Miami; Nancy S. Traver, Miami.

In the west Florida area: Irene S. Caissie, Sydney; Lee Drury

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De Cesare, Tampa; Dr. Ellen Kimmel, Tampa; Marie Mercer, Dunedin; Margaret L. Mosher, Clearwater; and Ruth Waite, Dunedin.

In the central Florida area: Rep. Beverly Burnsed, Lakeland; Jean Doyle, Maitland; Rep. Toni Jennings, Orlando; Winkie LeFils, Osteen; Marta Baez McPherson, Winter Haven; Katheryn Nelson, Maitland; Barbara C. Roper, Winter Garden; Sen. Lori Wilson, Cocoa Beach.

In the north Florida area: Ms. Budd Bell, Tallahassee; Roseann Cacciola, Jacksonville; Joan Cecilia Dekle, Jacksonville; Julia Glucker, Jacksonville; Dr. Freddie Grooms, Tallahassee; Sallye B. Mathis, Jacksonville; Dr. Edna Saffy, Jacksonville; Mamie Shelby, Pensacola; and Nancy Kelley Wittenberg, Tallahassee.

Alternate delegates to the national conference are: Deloras Knight, of Pinellas Park, first alternate; Beatrice Ettinger, of Orlando, second alternate; Ruth Shack, of Miami, third alternate; Patricia Law Jones, of Pensacola, fourth alternate; and Diana Campoamor, of Coral Gables, fifth alternate.

In a special meeting of the delegates at the conclusion of Florida Women's Conference, Senator Lori Wilson was elected chairperson of the Florida delegation.

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