



Soroptimist International of Los Angeles

Continuing the Journey

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❖ Special Issue ❖
90th Anniversary Celebration

Greetings!

To all SILA Members and Friends,

Our 90th Anniversary Celebration is now a part of history. We had such a great time and a wonderful turnout. Thank you to all who worked tirelessly (for many months, weeks, days, hours) to make our gala an event to remember. In our recent April business meeting, every time we tried to thank one member for her special work, she in turn would say, "It wasn't me alone. I couldn't have done it had it not been for ___!" We agreed that this was really a group effort and that everyone had a part in making it great. And I think that, if I tried to single out one person over another, each would write back and say, "I couldn't have done it had it not been for ___!" So, with heartfelt thanks and much appreciation to each and every one of you, I dedicate this poem, and I thank you all for a JOB WELL DONE!



*We take our breath and deeply sigh
As we stumble down from a recent high
We're finished with what we've begun
I'm so glad we're through, it sure was fun!*

*Now in our heart we have relief
Because from the start we sure did keep
Right at our work, and not give up
Now joyful waters fill our spirit's cup*

*We're ready now for our next task
We can begin with a fresh new flask*

(Author Unknown)

President Ginger

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A Day Enjoyed by All

All agreed it was a success! SILA's 90th Anniversary Celebration was held on Saturday, March 31 at the beautiful Los Angeles Athletic Club in Downtown Los Angeles.



It included a Silent Auction of donated items ranging from box seats at the Hollywood Bowl to a ride in an open-cockpit biplane.

Entertainment both during the reception and at the beginning of the program was provided by talented 93-year old pianist **Lenny Bluett**.



And the winner of the raffle for a money hat generously donated it to the WOA winner!

Attendees included SILA members in black and white attire highlighted with red rose cosages, award honorees and their families and supporters, Soroptimists from other clubs, local dignitaries, past honorees, families and friends. A lot of work but a lot of fun.



SILA members at the 90th Anniversary Celebration. Back row (L-R): DeAnna Blaylock, Jeri Durham, Jessica Washington, Daphyne Howell, Joyce Jacob, Stephanie Klopffleisch, Sheila Tatum, Ann Read, Bev Johnson, Diane Vernon, Emily Dell, Karen Johnson. Front row (L-R): Barbara Jury, Janet Elliott, Carole Olgesby, Ginger Cole, Pam Smith, Joan Johnson.

Karen Bass Honored with Ruby Award

SILA was pleased and proud to award **Congresswoman Karen Bass** SILA's 2012 Soroptimist Ruby Award. Ms. Bass' inspiring acceptance speech highlighted causes which improve the lives of women and girls which are so important to both Congresswoman Bass and SILA.

Congresswoman Bass served in the California State Assembly representing the 47th district from 2004 to 2010. In 2008, she was elected Speaker of the Assembly becoming only the second woman and third African American to serve in that post. In 2010, she was elected to represent California's 33rd congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives. She serves on the House Budget Committee and on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.



Before beginning her political career, Congresswoman Bass practiced and taught in the health care field for about 10 years as a Physician Assistant and as a clinical instructor at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine Physician Assistant Program. In 1990, Congresswoman Bass, then a local physician assistant and community activist, started and ran the Community Coalition composed of a group of concerned residents of South Los Angeles. Over the last 22 years, the Coalition has led successful efforts for major policy changes that would make Los Angeles a healthier and safer place to live, including closing over 200 liquor stores and converting dozens of other locations into more positive, community beneficial businesses like grocery stores and Laundromats.

Throughout her time in the California Assembly, Congresswoman Bass worked on behalf of children in foster care. She continues this work as the Co-Chair and Founder of the bipartisan Foster Youth Caucus. Through her service on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Congresswoman Bass is a force in addressing the trafficking of women and girls, and human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Many thanks to SILA member **Jessica Washington** for arranging for Congresswoman Bass to be at SILA's celebration and to Congresswoman Bass for the extra time she spent with so many of the other honorees and guests.

Congresswoman Roybal-Allard Introduces Bass



SILA was honored to have **Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard** introduce Congresswoman Karen Bass as she received the Ruby Award. Congresswoman Roybal-Allard is a Woman of Distinction in her own right.

Congresswoman Roybal-Allard served in the California State Assembly, representing the 56th District from 1987 to 1992. She became the 33rd Congressional District's representative in November 1992. She is the first Latina in U.S. history to be appointed to the House Appropriations Committee, which controls the purse strings of the federal government. The congresswoman serves on two subcommittees -- the Subcommittee on Homeland Security and the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. As a member of these subcommittees, Congresswoman Roybal-Allard oversees funding of the U.S. Department of Homeland

Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education.

Throughout her tenure in public service, Congresswoman Roybal-Allard has remained committed to expanding opportunities for residents of her district and working families throughout the country. She champions efforts to increase access to health care, create affordable housing, modernize and upgrade public schools, improve school safety, increase the federal minimum wage, reduce the high Hispanic

drop-out rates, preserve Social Security and Medicare, and stimulate economic growth to create new jobs.

Her political style, described as quiet and conciliatory, has contributed to her many legislative victories. She won passage of landmark environmental legislation, as well as new laws in the areas of domestic violence and sexual harassment.

Thanks go to SILA member **Julie Mairs** for contacting Congresswoman Roybal-Allard and coordinating the participation of both Congresswomen at the 90th Anniversary Celebration.

90 Years Retrospective, the Movie

A special feature of SILA's 90th Anniversary Celebration was the screening of a 6-minute film made by SILA's own professional filmmaker, **Emily Dell**.

Through the use of archive photos and personal interviews with current members, *90 Years Retrospective* tells the story of SILA's nine decades of service activities and accomplishments.

You can view this unique celebration video for the first time or as a reminder of SILA's 90 years below:



SILA 90th Highlight Film

WOA Winner: Heidi DeLeon

Heidi DeLeon was the worthy recipient of SILA's 2012 Women's Opportunity Award, an award given to women who are the primary financial support for their family to help them improve their education, skills and employment prospects.

While supporting herself and her son, Heidi is currently in the undergraduate degree program at California State University, Dominguez Hills, majoring in African Studies.

In her own words: "When I was 14, my father murdered my mother. We were poor and we saw the abuse my mother endured daily. I knew she loved me. There were many ups and downs after my mother's death; I began to have problems with alcohol and drugs. By the time I was 20 I found myself on a bus to State Prison. I was in and out of prison for four years."

"The birth of my son four years ago changed my life. I started to work to pay off my loans and went to school where I received my certificate as a drug and alcohol counselor. My goal is to become a professor at a community college or university."

WOA Committee Chair **Joyce Jacob** says the reference letters from LA Centers for Alcohol & Drug Abuse and Volunteers of America were key to selecting Heidi as this year's winner. She received a check for \$1,000 from SILA.



(L-R) Barbara Jury, Laura Oastapiej (Volunteers of America), WOA winner Heidi DeLeon, Joyce Jacob

Violet Richardson Award Winner: Anna Yeghyan

SILA was proud to recognize **Anna Yeghyan** as the recipient of this year's Soroptimist Violet Richardson Award. This award recognizes a high school senior for her community service, and awards the student with a check for \$500, with another \$500 going to the charity of her choice.

Anna is a senior at North Hollywood High School and is passionate about social and environmental justice. She stood out as an applicant for this year's Violet Richardson Award because of her many activities that spotlighted her passion. Appropriately, her charity of choice was TreePeople, an environmental nonprofit that "unites the power of trees, people and technology to grow a sustainable future for Los Angeles."



In receiving her award Anna commented on the fact that she was aware that past winners had been in the gifted programs at their schools but she described herself as a "regular" student. In reviewing her accomplishments and her essay, VRA Committee Chair **Jessica Washington** had to differ with her. "She is an amazing young lady," Jessica said. "Her standing in school was not the deciding factor. It was her impressive essay."

Anna was not only very appreciative of her award but her father and Mark McAler from TreePeople who accompanied Anna to the event were very impressed with her accomplishments. SILA again found a young lady who may one day be a member of SILA.

Graduate Fellowship Award Winners: Jennie Giron and Adrienne Meier

From 49 outstanding applications down to five of the most deserving, the Graduate Fellowship Award Committee, chaired by SILA member **Joan Johnson**, selected two impressive winners based on their academic excellence, financial need, community service and goals to benefit their communities.

Jennie Giron

An outstanding student, Jennie graduated magna cum laude from New Mexico State, followed by her Masters of Education from Arizona State with a 3.9 GPA. Jennie next spent two years working for Teach for America. As a 7th grade math teacher, she learned to cope with a lack of essential supplies such as chairs, desks, and even books. Overcoming these obstacles, Jennie was able to increase her students' knowledge by 3 grade levels.

From this experience she began to question what it takes for a good leader to become a great leader. This quest led her to Claremont Graduate University where she is currently studying Positive Organizational Psychology as she works toward an MBA.

Music has always been an important part of Jennie's life, from playing the flute in the Southwest All-star Music Ensemble at age 15, to serving as drum major in her senior year at high school, to her competition in ballroom dancing. She is currently a member of the Claremont College Ballroom Dance Company which took 2nd place at the Nationals and 1st place at the San Francisco Open.

Jennie's professors describe her as humble, upbeat, enthusiastic, energetic and efficient, all characteristics apparent to the Fellowship Award Committee.



Adrienne Meier

A graduate of Northwest Nazarene University, Adrienne has completed her MA degree in Clinical Psychology at Fuller Graduate School, where she is currently working on her Ph.D. Degree in Clinical Psychology.

Adrienne has a deep commitment toward those who are not only of lower socioeconomic status, but also have physical and or mental needs. As she says: "I love working with individuals from a variety of setting, such as medical psychiatric and forensic facilities." Included in these is City of Hope Medical Center, Patton State Hospital, UCLA Longevity Center, and prison facilities.

Last summer Adrienne and her husband backpacked through England, France, Italy, and Switzerland, staying in various hostels. She also enjoys activities such as kickboxing, weight lifting and Zumba, She is also a runner. Adrienne was described as funny without being caustic, intelligent without being condescending, and organized without being rigid.



SILA is proud to present a \$3,500 Graduate Fellowship Award to both Jennie and Adrienne.

Thanks to Other Soroptimists

How wonderful to have a lot of Soroptimists from other clubs and from Camino Real Region join SILA in celebrating its 90 years as the third oldest club in Soroptimist International and the "mother" and grandmother" club of many other local clubs. "Your club reached for the stars and sparkled like many gems," said **Donna Pope**, President of SI LA West-Santa Monica. Thanks to all of you for your participation and support!



SILA members with attendees from Camino Real Region and SI Montebello. (L-R): Kelly Fogarty, Letty Gutierrez, Mary Rogers, Michele Memmott, Ginger Cole, Jeri Durham, Linda Haines, Sheila Tatum

