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EDITOR'S PICK

## Assemblyman Ramos hails 14 'Women of Distinction'

Assemblyman James C. Ramos

Mar 25, 2021

Assemblyman James C. Ramos has recognized Dr. Veronica Kelley as the 40th Assembly District Woman of the Year and 13 Women of Distinction in a virtual program, including two from Redlands and two from Mentone.

“These women were honored not only for their impressive talents and achievements, but also because of their extraordinary contributions to our community,” Ramos said. “Some of them contribute by fostering community spirit, some by assisting the needy, others for selflessly helping youth develop leadership and job skills or in many other ways.

“Busy as they are, they still find time to help others. They make our communities stronger, more united and better places in which to live.”

The 2019 Woman of the Year, **Kristine Scott**, served as keynote speaker. The honorees were named last year but the ceremony was not held because of the onset of COVID-19 restrictions.

Kelley, director of the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health, is an advocate for ensuring mental and behavioral health resources for all not only in her home county, but also in the state. She helped inform the state process that allowed counties to provide more services to county residents, drawing down more federal dollars to assist individuals in their recovery process from addiction, through the Organized Delivery System.

During the 2015 terrorist shooting in San Bernardino, she directed the daily crisis operations response for the county at large.

**Dawn McCoy** of Redlands is president and founder of the Red Shoe Project, which offers quality mental and emotional health services regardless of resources or ability to pay.



“She is a dedicated volunteer and tireless advocate for mental health wellness and services,” said a press release.

McCoy leads the Healing Strong Hands cancer support group, Down Time grief and loss support group and Cooking with Kindness. Cooking with Kindness is a group for local youth who may be living with — or surviving — abuse, neglect, bullying, and addiction. McCoy is a member of the Redlands Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club.



**Jennifer Michaels**, a program administrator with the city of Redlands, works with students on special recreational and community service events while helping them develop job and leadership skills. That work has contributed to their admission at prestigious colleges and universities. In 2018, Redlands recognized her as the Part-time Employee of the Year Award.



**Maribeth Lotito** is co-owner of the Mill Creek Mill Creek Cattle Co. Smokehouse Saloon and a member of the Mentone Chamber of Commerce. She and her husband, Jim, have donated time, food, clothing and funds to several organizations including the Loma Linda Ronald McDonald House, Crafton Hills College Foundation, Youth Hope, Solera Support Our Troops, and Smiles for Seniors.

**Angie De La Rosa** is the owner and broker for A Noteworthy Realty. She has served as a coordinator for the yearly Mentone Cook Off, organizing vendors and contestants and assisting in whatever needs to be done to create a successful event. She organized artists to

create historic murals and served the community lunch when the murals were dedicated in 2019.

### Other honorees

**Highland:** Rowena Ramos is a San Manuel Band of Mission Indians tribal leader and contributor to numerous local charities including Loma Linda Children's Hospital, Boys and Girls Club, SEBA children's charities, The Unforgettable Foundation, YMCA, Santa Clause Inc., and Time for Change Foundation. Ramos is the mother of the assemblyman.

Stephanie Argentine owns Arrowhead Tang Soo Do and takes pride in teaching special needs children karate skills and representing the United States around the world as a martial arts instructor.

Debra Olguin serves as director of Veronica's Home of Mercy, a transitional home for women. The organization offers assistance to women dealing with homelessness, substance abuse, and other issues.

**Loma Linda:** Dr. Purvi Parwani is a cardiologist and assistant professor of medicine at Loma Linda University Health. She is director of the women's heart health clinic at LLUH, the first of its kind in the Inland Empire.

Synthia Alanis, a registered oncology nurse, works in the Oncology/Hematology Department at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital. She also has volunteered for the Childhood Cancer Foundation of Southern California.

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**Rancho Cucamonga:** Dr. Akin Merino is a business owner, psychologist and lead minister.

Superintendent Janet Temkin has served the Rancho Cucamonga School District for more than 30 years as a teacher, site coordinator, vice-principal, principal, assistant superintendent and now as its educational leader.

San Bernardino: Vanessa Perez is director of the Time for Change Foundation. She and her staff focus on providing job training and assistance to the homeless, counseling, and other services to help the disenfranchised achieve self-sufficiency.

**Shonie Perry** is a program technician with the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, Homeless Education.

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**James Folmer**

editor