

For Immediate Release

Sally Ann Parks, Chair

PO Box 84

Hinckley, ME 04944

207-453-6004

TWENTIETH ANNUAL MAINE WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

The Twentieth Annual Maine Women's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Gala Celebration will be observed on Saturday, March 21, 2009 in Jewett Hall at the University of Maine at Augusta. Each year's ceremony is held at UMA during the month of March, in observance of Women's History Month.

A Silver Tea to celebrate the first twenty years of the Maine Women's Hall of Fame and to honor our inductee will be held at 2:00 PM. Contributions will be accepted to augment BPW/Maine scholarship program.

The first twenty years of the Maine Women's Hall of Fame will be highlighted at a special ceremony beginning at 3:00 PM. Three BPW/Maine Past State Presidents will be recognized for their contributions to the Maine Women's Hall of Fame, BPW/Maine, BPW/Maine Futurama Foundation, and the BPW/Maine Futurama Scholarship Program. BPW/Maine Women to be honored are the late Patricia (Patti) Carol Bourgoin, the late Jeanne Littlefield Hammond, and the late Arline Andrews Lovejoy.

The Induction Ceremony is for our honoree Sharon E. Barker, of Bangor, the Director of the Women's Resource Center at the University of Maine, Orono, Maine. The sponsors will participate in the ceremony.

It was with enormous respect and admiration for her commitment to the advancement of girls and women in Maine, for her extraordinary leadership in achieving landmark benchmarks

of educational access and equity for all women, and for her exceptional public service contributions to the State of Maine, that Sharon Barker was nominated for induction into the Maine Women's Hall of Fame. In all of her leadership and advocacy roles, Sharon Barker's passion for changing the status quo, for advancing the public good for all citizens, and for improving economic opportunities for all women, is legendary. Her signature style, keen intellect, and quintessential networking skills personify the personal professional qualities that have become the "trademark" qualities honored by the Maine Women's Hall of Fame.

Although her position as Director of the Women's Resource Center at the University of Maine has afforded her with opportunities to make significant contributions in the development of all students (men and women) as well as the entire faculty and staff who work in so many diverse disciplines with diverse responsibilities, her professional achievements have far exceeded the expectations for her position and have clearly extended beyond the borders of the campus. In "Spotlight on Sharon Barker," a *Viewpoint* focus by Lynn Thibeau of Bradley and Johndrow, LLC, (Spring 2007), she is commended for providing support for the public schools and to numerous community and governmental organizations that benefit women, including the nationally recognized "Expanding Your Horizons" for middle school girls, her leadership in founding the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center (recently returning as president of its board of directors and leading the Center's extremely successful capital campaign), her service on numerous boards of directors including their presidency, chairs and/or vice-chairs (e.g., Penobscot Valley American Association of University Women, Maine Women's Fund, Eastern Regional Commission for Women, Good Samaritan Agency, Bangor CUREs Project, Bangor Rape Crisis Center, and Women's Business Development Corporation) and chairing the Komen Foundation Grant Review Committee. She has held many numerous leadership roles for a variety of associations and her significant public service contribution on state task forces and special projects including membership on then Congressman John Baldacci's Advisory Committee on Juvenile Crime, Domestic Violence, Drug Abuse, and Hate Crimes.

Currently serving as Chair of the Women's Employment Issues Committee of the Maine Jobs Council, Sharon Barker was instrumental in the issuance of its recent report entitled, "Working Women in Maine: Initial Indicators for Progress," which tracked women's success in

the labor market by collecting data on women's employment, wages, education, and health insurance coverage. Such prominence can also be seen on the national level as well with her receipt of one of two grants from American Association of University Women to establish a scholar-in-residence program. Through this work, she collaborated with author and researcher Lyn Mikel Brown of Colby College to study the societal forces that influence girls and ultimately affect women's friendships. The book by Brown, entitled *Girl Fighting* is one on many outcomes of this grant.

The significant contributions that Sharon Barker has made in over 35 years of service to the citizens of Maine are reflected in the numerous national, state, and local awards that recognize her life work. While we know that "an accomplishment is simply to have done something," we recognize that "an achievement is to have done something right!" Sharon Barker has not simply accomplished a great deal for Maine and Maine women, she has achieved a significantly higher benchmark for Maine whose personal and professional aspirations have been enhanced by her own mentoring. Notable among her awards are the 2004 Sarah Orne Jewet Award of the Maine Women's Fund, the 1997 National Education Association Mary Hatwood Futrell Award, the 1997 Mabel Sine Wadsworth Women's Health Achievement Award, the 1999 Bangor and Maine Federation of Business and Professional Women's Woman of the Year Awards, and the 1995 Steve Gould Award at the University of Maine. Adding Sharon Barker's Maine legacy to the roster of the Maine Women's Hall of Fame is a crowning achievement for having done things right!!!

In the Summer 2002 issue of the University of Maine Alumni Magazine in which Sharon Barker was recognized in a three page faculty/staff profile, she concluded the interview with the following quote. "Future leaders from all over the state come here, and we have an opportunity to teach them how to value what we have in this state and how to build on it." Moreover, she said, "I feel blessed to be in such a stimulating environment with so many opportunities to do what I think is important. I can act consistently with my values, and I believe that has an impact on the people around me. It gives them courage to speak up, too." Reviewing the names of former inductees into the Maine Women's Hall of Fame, the award winners have given

women..."the courage to speak up, too." Sharon Barker has clearly given women "the courage to speak up, too."

The Maine Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW/Maine) established the Maine Women's Hall of Fame in 1990, to honor women who have made an outstanding contribution to improving opportunities for all Maine women. The BPW/Maine Futurama Foundation and The University of Maine at Augusta are co-sponsors.

The three criteria for selection to be inducted are (1) woman's achievements have had a significant statewide impact, (2) woman's achievements significantly improved the lives of women in Maine, and (3) woman's contribution has enduring value for women.

The Maine Women's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2009 in Jewett Hall at the University of Maine at Augusta. For more information, please contact Sally Ann Parks, chair for Hall of Fame, P O Box 84, Hinckley, ME 04944; 207-453-6004.