

# Hall of Fame Class of 2016

*The Hall of Fame Award is awarded to an adult who has been a member for at least 25 years, who has delivered service that far exceeds the expectation of any position that has had a lasting impact on the Girl Scout organization or her/his community. This award will be presented a maximum of 10 people per year, and may be awarded posthumously.*

**Miriam Baker** is a lifetime member who has been a troop leader, service team member, field manager and director of membership for Trailways. She then used her experience to ease the combination of different membership processes during the council merger, eventually becoming the VP of membership. She helped develop *GirlsSpace*, a program that serves thousands of girls in inner city Chicago, and worked to increase membership by reaching out to the Muslim and Hispanic communities. She also worked with GSUSA to become a training facilitator for the roll out of the GSLE in 2007 and has facilitated learning for adults at Macy's and at national conferences. She supports all parts of the council and is a valued resource for adult volunteers and staff.

**Bonnie L. Batchelor** was awarded the Honor Pin and the Thanks Badge; has been a master trainer for 20 years; is a certified instructor of trainers; and has worked as a staff member for councils all over the United States. She is an expert in Girl Scout history, traditions, skills and lore, and her love of the outdoors led to many well-trained volunteers adventuring with their troops from places like the Colorado Rockies to the Appalachian Trail. From the time she led her first troop, she has impacted thousands of girls and volunteers with her soft-spoken, yet mighty manner. We are fortunate to have her back in the Chicago area, where she is currently acting as a service unit consultant and will no doubt continue to live and breathe the Girl Scout way.

**Keitha Benkowski** was an incredible Girl Scout, having received just about every national recognition, including the Thanks Badge, Thanks Badge II and Woman of the Century. She served as a troop leader for more than 35 years; increased scouting in her area tenfold; managed a service unit; served as the chair for LEAP for 10 years; and ran a cookie cupboard out of her garage for nearly 20 years. She even sold her camper to make more room for cookies! Camp Juniper Knoll held a special place in her heart, and she had an amazing knack for "making things appear" when they were needed most – windows for Low Lodge, new kitchens for Wilderness and Health Center, a pot-bellied stove for Bensinger. She gave her treasure and time to make camp a special place for all Girl Scouts and often got a lot of other people involved with her contagious enthusiasm. Keitha passed away in 2015, and she has left a dedicated legacy of the spirit of Girl Scouting that will always be dear to our council.

**Marty Ewing** began working with Girl Scouts in the 1980s, serving on the membership staff in DuPage and later serving as the council manager of membership for many years. Though she recently retired, Marty is still active assisting troops. She received the Thanks Badge and Thanks Badge II, and many people remember her rewarding good deeds and service with "Marty Money," which could be redeemed at a year-end auction. Her major contribution to Girl Scouting was working diligently, with great understanding and respect, with the Islamic Center to start troops at the Islamic Foundation School, which provided Girl Scouting to hundreds of girls. She also organized the first council trip to Colorado, which became an annual outing involving up to 150 girls each year. Her calm ability to navigate any situation is a tribute to Girl Scout perseverance.





# Hall of Fame Class of 2016

**Edna P. Leaner** served as a troop leader for more than 50 years, and Brownies remain her favorite level. She has held every position imaginable at the service unit level, was a council trainer, served on the board of directors in the 1980s, acted as a national delegate, and was a council delegate on and off for 50 years! She has received the Thanks Badge and Thanks Badge II, and is well known for expanding the reach of Girl Scouting on Chicago's South Side for the African-American community—recruiting members and ensuring everyone had a complete uniform to wear as often as possible. She was seldom seen without her perfectly placed insignia and signature hat and gloves and was an authority on Girl Scout etiquette and ceremonies, many of which she wrote. She taught girls to toboggan at Camp Butternut Springs when she was in her 80s and has been inducted into the City of Chicago Senior Citizen Hall of Fame. Edna leaves an indelible impression of Girl Scouting on everyone she meets.

**Karen Schillings** has served as a troop leader, service team member, member of the board of directors and as council president for South Cook County. She served on the council realignment committee, CEO search committee, is a current council historian, and recently became a Daisy leader! She was instrumental in the creation of the "Pennies for Trees" project for Girl Scouts' 100th birthday, and has been inducted into the Homewood Hall of Fame for her work with Girl Scouts in her community. She also established the Corrine Schillings Scholarship for Gold Award recipients, which is awarded to girls studying foreign languages in college. When working with girls, her focus is to guide them to develop their individual talents, make sound decisions and confidently apply their skills to making the world a better place. She is currently the chair of the adult recognition committee.

**Marge Smith** spent many years as a troop leader at St. Barbara's School in Brookfield, IL. She continued as a leader long after her daughter was out of Girl Scouts, encouraging 100% girl participation, mentoring religious awards and securing cookie booth sites through her connections with local businesses. She coordinated service opportunities in the community so that girls would learn to give back to others. She also guided many girls to complete their Silver and Gold Awards. Marge passed away suddenly last year, and though her passing left a huge gap in her service area, she also left behind a great wealth of ideas and opportunities for Girl Scouting to continue to thrive in the community.

**Vikki Zack** has been part of Girl Scouting for more than 50 years and has been honored with the Thanks Badge and Thanks Badge II. She managed the fall product program in her area for many years, and has served as a troop leader, council delegate, service unit registrar and council historian. She is also part of the adult recognition committee. Through her work with local parents, she has strengthened Girl Scouting in the Hammond area by showcasing the many benefits this organization offers girls. She currently leads Daisy and Cadette troops and mentors new leaders to ensure they have a great Girl Scout experience.

