

2006 TRIBUTE AWARDS

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

The inspiration continues as remarkable women and their accomplishments are honored Tuesday at the YWCA Tribute Awards.

This year the popular event moves to DeVos Place.

This year's honored

women join more than 150 leaders and trailblazers recognized with Tribute Awards since 1977.

Because developing leaders among young women is key to the YWCA's vision, the Tribute student honoree also will receive the Judy Lloyd Student Leadership Award, a \$1,000 award to help

young exceptional young women achieve their life goals after high school graduation.

Tribute is the YWCA's biggest fundraising event of the year. Last year, it raised more than \$65,000 for YWCA programs, which serve victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child sexual

abuse, as well as funding efforts to reduce girls' vulnerability to violence.

Tickets are available through noon Monday for the luncheon, set for noon-1:30 p.m. Tuesday at DeVos Place, 303 Monroe Ave. NW. Doors open at 11:30.

Tickets are \$50 each. Call 459-4681.

THE LIST

Honored women

The 2006 honorees are:

- Carolyn Helms, front, owner/teacher at The Yoga Studio, J3
- Katherine Humphrey, middle row, left, president/CEO of Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan, J2
- Karen Henry, middle row, second from left, executive director of Grand Rapids Weed & Seed, J2
- Dianette Hight, middle row, second from right, engineering services administrator for the city of Grand Rapids, J3
- Olivia Margo Anderson, middle row, right, board of trustees of Grand Rapids Community College, J3
- Lori Tenenhouse, top right, artistic director of the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus, J3
- This year's student honoree and Judy Lloyd Leadership Award recipient is Lily Nguyen, top left, of Kelloggsville High School, J4.



ARTS: LORI TENNENHOUSE

She conducts herself well

BY ERIN FETTIG
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

When Lori Tennenhouse was a girl, she dreamed of being the conductor of a musical group. She taught herself to play guitar when she was 12. Then she learned the bass and electric bass, but she had no formal musical training — which she figured she would need to become a conductor.

So she tucked her conducting dream away.

She headed to college at the University of Michigan, then moved to Boston and went to technical school. On the side, she sang and played in several bands.

Then she turned 30, and she made out a list of things she would do if she could start her life over.

On the top of her list? Becoming a conductor.

She had moved back to Michigan and to the Grand Rapids area, and had taken a job at WXMI (Channel 17) as assistant chief engineer — where she still works. She started singing in a local choir, but the repertoire of music wasn't quite what Tennen-

“To have women in Grand Rapids singing an Arabic peace song, I think it's valuable.”

— Lori Tennenhouse

house wanted to sing. She wanted more interesting, involved music that would cross cultural lines and teach peace and justice.

She and a few friends decided to start a women's chorus.

They met one night to talk about it, and someone said, “We'll need a conductor.”

Tennenhouse raised her hand. “I'll do it,” she said.

There was just one little problem: She had no idea how to conduct.

That was not about to deter Tennenhouse. She took lessons, attended seminars and “made a lot of mistakes.”

She's grown as a musician and artist, and the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus has grown right along with her.

Ten women attended its first meeting in 1996. Today, the group is about 40 strong, and it sings at least twice a year before audiences.

The women have cut CDs and traveled. Most of all, they have learned — about themselves as singers, and about diversity, cultures and community.

That is a testament to Tennenhouse's dedication, says Janice Scalza, vice president of the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus.

“She's a genius,” Scalza said. “She sees things that other people don't, and because of that, she acts on them. She creates things from nothing.”

As artistic director, Tennenhouse chooses the music. She even has gone to the extent of commissioning pieces from well-known songwriters to get the depth of work she wants for the group.

If Tennenhouse chooses music from China, she'll arrange a learning conference for the group.

She'll have someone from China come to the group to help teach the music and pronunciation of the words. They also will teach the group about the culture and why the song



PRESS PHOTO/JOHN H. BROUWER

Living the dream: Lori Tennenhouse, center, learned to be a conductor by doing and studying after she took on the role with the Grand Rapids Women's Chorus.

might be meaningful.

Tennenhouse says learning the music that way makes sense, and performing it is important.

And it's important work.

“To have women in Grand Rapids singing an Arabic peace song, I think it's valuable,” Tennenhouse says.

Sometimes, she finds it difficult to believe she reached her dream without the musical ed-

ucation most conductors have.

“I feel like I've been impersonating a choral director,” she joked.

And yet her story proves holding on to a dream can pay off, she said.

“Immerse yourself in it. It can become something you really love. That's really what happened to me.”

E-mail: yourlife@grpress.com

MORE ON MLIVE

EXTRA: See video excerpts of Tribute winners. Complete videos shown Tuesday at the YWCA Tribute awards luncheon.

Online home: mlive.com/grpress

PROFESSIONS: OLIVIA MARGO ANDERSON

An example of excellence

BY BETH LOECHLER
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

Margo Anderson has spent most of her 65 years in Grand Rapids Public Schools, and she isn't done with them yet.

She graduated from the former South High in 1959 and returned as a teacher nine years later. After 15 years in elementary school classrooms, 10 years as a high school guidance counselor and another seven as a principal, she retired in 2000.

Since then, she hasn't exactly been sleeping late and enjoying an abundance of free time.

“I'm still into everything,” she says with a smile.

Since she retired, she has been itinerant principal in several GRPS elementary schools, filling in when a principal takes an extended leave because of illness or other reasons.

In 2001, she also was elected to the Grand Rapids Community College Board of Trustees after a community group encouraged her to seek the seat. Her term expires next year and she plans to run again.

“Margo has worked diligently for the rights of all students to gain access to higher education and a career,” says

“This is the first time I'm being recognized for my passion, for my love of children.”

— Margo Anderson

Michael Stearns, superintendent of Northview Public Schools and a fellow GRCC trustee. “Margo's life continues to be one of service to children and the community,” Stearns nominated Anderson for the Tribute award.

“This is the first time I'm being recognized for my passion, for my love of children,” says Anderson, who won a Giants award for community service in 1991.

—She truly shined in 2004 when she opened Highlands Middle School for Northview. The educator tapped for the job was promoted just before the start of the school year, leaving Highlands without a leader for its first month.

As a “highly successful African-American woman working in a predominantly white environment, Margo

changed attitudes of people by setting an example of excellence,” Stearns wrote in his nomination.

“If you're genuine, there are no barriers,” Anderson says. “It worked out beautifully. In fact, they wanted me to stay.”

Growing up, Anderson learned the importance of education from her parents, who did not attend college. She would line up her stuffed animals and dolls on her roll-top desk and play teacher. She never married or had children, focusing instead on the thousands of kids who passed through the doors of the schools where she worked.

“I've been to just about every building in the Grand Rapids district,” she says.

She ran into one of her former students last month at Centerpointe Mall, where the young woman recognized her and recollected that Anderson had taken her shopping for a winter coat when she showed up in her counseling office without one on a frigid day about 13 years ago.

“She told me she still has that coat in the back of her closet. She said she never wants to get rid of it because it reminds her of me.”

E-mail: bloechler@grpress.com



Retired, but not: Margo Anderson began playing teacher as a young child. She has worked in almost every building in the Grand Rapids Public Schools district. She is pictured with sixth-graders at Alger Middle School, from left, Aliyah Walker, Alex Garcia, Ian Swanson and Tiyah Walker, all 11.

PRESS PHOTO/DIANNE CARROLL BURDICK

SPORTS, FITNESS AND WELLNESS: CAROLYN HEINES

Stretching mind and body

BY BETH LOECHLER
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

Carolyn Heines wasn't particularly interested in yoga when she began studying it in 1978.

Her interest was in Hinduism, and her spiritual adviser suggested she teach hatha yoga, the kind that focuses on breathing exercises and strengthening the body, so she decided to give it a try.

Twenty-nine years later, she's no longer a devotee to an Eastern religion, but her commitment to yoga remains strong and steadfast.

Heines is the mother — at the age of 71 perhaps grandmother is a better description — of yoga in Grand Rapids.

While athletic clubs, city recreation programs and dance studios everywhere offer yoga classes nowadays, she introduced the discipline to Grand Rapids in 1979 after taking a three-month course in San Francisco.

“I taught the first class out of

“Yoga is helpful in that because it gives us a way of knowing ourselves better.”

— Carolyn Heines

my home, then in a series of basements, storefronts and anywhere the rent was cheap,” she says.

“I was making a living. It wasn't much of a living, but I didn't have many needs. My life was simple.”

Her business, the Yoga Studio in Eastown, employs four teachers and works with about 150 students a week. She still teaches five classes a week and isn't thinking about retirement anytime soon.

“I can't keep going forever,” Heines says. “I used to say I'd stop when I couldn't stand on

my hands anymore, but I'm afraid my mind is going to have to go first.

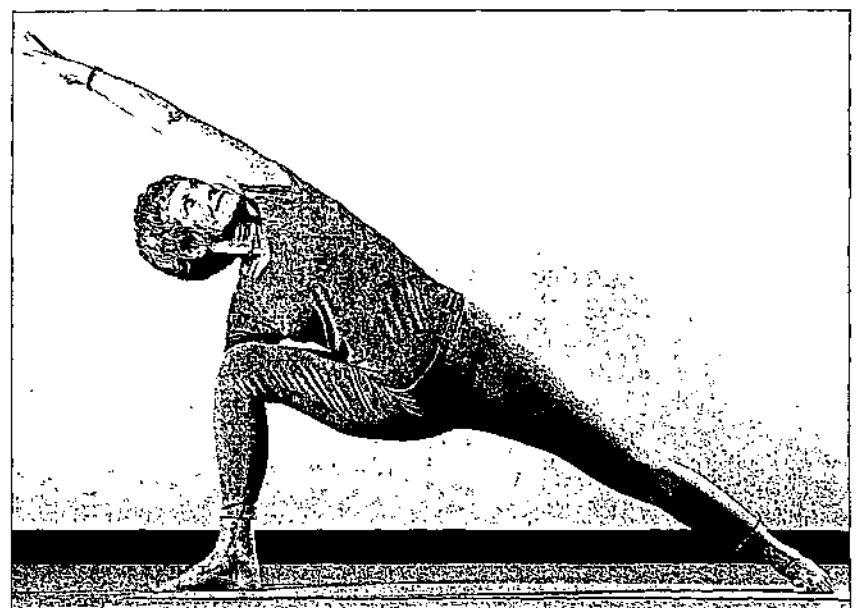
“Yoga has kept me in such good shape.”

Thanks to Heines, yoga has had a positive effect on hundreds of other women in the Grand Rapids area.

Heines helped shift yoga from “some remote, exotic practice” to something “ordinary people right here in Grand Rapids could do and benefit from,” yoga student Jean Reed Bahle wrote in her nomination form.

“I believe the present burgeoning interest in yoga and the proliferation of yoga classes now offered in the area can be directly traced to seeds Carolyn planted 27 years ago,” Bahle said.

There's a lot of local competition, Heines agrees. The business is tougher now. Still, she founded the Grand Rapids Yoga Teachers Association four years ago to maintain high standards and offer support for other teachers, most of whom



PRESS PHOTO/PAUL L. NEWBY II

Bending with the best of them: Carolyn Heines holds a Utthita Parsvakonasana position in The Yoga Studio, which she owns.

have been her students.

Heines, who was divorced more than 30 years ago and has three grown children, has been surrounded by women most of her life.

She has three sisters, grew

up without a father in the house, and about 90 percent of her students are women.

“I think women are inclined not to trust themselves as much as they should,” she says. “Yoga is helpful in that because

it gives us a way of knowing ourselves better. If we have more self-awareness and more self-knowledge we become stronger as a result.”

E-mail: bloechler@grpress.com

ADVOCACY: KAREN HENRY

Her spirit whispers loudly

BY TERRI FINCH HAMILTON
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

Karen Henry is not the whispering type. Her voice has reverberated throughout the Grand Rapids community for decades as she has spoken out on U.S. policy in the Middle East, sexual abuse, civil rights. Even as a girl, she often would come home from her Grand Rapids elementary school, angry about something that happened that didn't seem right to her.

So it's not an easy thing for her to lose much of her voice to cancer. Breast cancer that hit 17 years ago has reappeared as an inoperable tumor in her throat, squeezing one vocal cord.

Cancer has weakened her voice, but not her spirit. Get her talking about injustice, and she whispers as loudly as she can.

Henry, 62, an Arab-American, is a leading expert on Arab culture, often called on to lead workshops, speak or comment on Middle Eastern affairs. She founded the Women's Action Network in the mid-1990s to address violence against women and girls and negative media images.

"We strengthen each other by speaking out. About the good and the bad."

— Karen Henry

She started the Women's Political Action Network in her living room, a group devoted to getting local women involved in politics. Gov. Jennifer Granholm appointed her to a statewide advisory council on Arab affairs.

Some of her best moments have been one-on-one.

"When you organize against a big movement, people can say, 'This doesn't apply to me,'" says Henry, executive director of the crime-prevention program Grand Rapids Operation Weed & Seed, which she has turned into a national model for communities struggling to rebuild crime-ridden neighborhoods. "But when, on a personal basis, you talk to someone about something offensive they said, you have a better chance of making

change." She does that all the time, stopping offensive jokes at parties, raising her hand at panel discussions if someone says something insensitive.

She was looking for an Easter card in Arabic once at an Ann Arbor card shop and asked the sales clerk for help.

"She said, 'Those people aren't Christian,'" Henry recalls. "I said, 'I'm one of those people and I'm Christian.' She was very embarrassed, but we had a conversation about it. Then she understood. As I left, she said she'd try to get some of those cards in the next year."

She smiles. "That was a good moment."

Last year, Henry received the Civil Libertarian of the Year award from the American Civil Liberties Union-Western Michigan branch. She has worked as a journalist in Jerusalem, giving women there a voice. She volunteers, helping families of children with cancer. When she decided to speak for the first time about being sexually assaulted in college, it was in front of 300 people at a YWCA rally. Dozens of women came up to her afterward to share their own stories.

Funny, vibrant and an enthu-



PRESS PHOTO/T.J. HAMILTON

"I have a built-in radar for injustice": Karen Henry has spoken out on myriad issues throughout the Grand Rapids community. "You know those 3-D images, where if you look at it long enough you can see another image, like a fish? Then you can never again look at that image without seeing the fish. That's kind of how I feel about injustice. Once I see it, I can't look away."

siastic laughter, Henry now struggles to adjust to her quieter voice.

She recently finished 30 radiation treatments, in hopes the tumor in her throat would shrink. It hasn't. With stage-four cancer, she's weighing her treatment options, and, in her usual way, talking openly about

it. "We strengthen each other by speaking out," she says. "About the good and the bad."

But it's hard for women who speak out, she says. They're often criticized as aggressive, instead of praised as accomplished.

"When I started doing public

speaking, I was hurt by the criticism," Henry says. "I had to decide: Should I keep speaking out or tone it down?" She smiles.

"I speak out, because I must," she says. "It's easier to live with myself this way."

E-mail: thamilton@grpress.com

COMMUNITY SERVICE: DIANETTE HIGHT

She has a passion that pays off

BY MATT VANDE BUNTE
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS



PRESS PHOTOS/DIANNE CARROLL BURDICK

A heart for the community: Dianette Hight, engineering services administrator for the city of Grand Rapids, is a tireless volunteer helping engineer change through such organizations as the Women's Resource Center and Dwelling Place.

From the Women's Resource Center to Planned Parenthood to Dwelling Place, Dianette Hight has spent many hours in board meetings, and many more reading through paperwork to prepare. "Every other Wednesday is my hair appointment night," Hight said.

"That's when I will sit under the dryer with my stacks of stuff."

The 58-year-old who grew up on Pleasant Street SW is engineering services administrator for the city of Grand Rapids and a community volunteer who just doesn't quit.

A former president of the Women's Resource Center, Hight was instrumental in growing a Women in the Workplace luncheon into an annual community-wide affair.

She relished her service to the board of Planned Parenthood, motivated by the memory of two friends who died trying to get unsafe abortions before the practice was legal.

"All the good things that people did for me, I can't pay all of them back, but I sure can pay it forward."

— Dianette Hight

As president of an advisory council for the transitional housing program at Dwelling Place, Hight helped plan an annual spring fashion show fundraiser — though she is yet to model in the event.

"We were very poor. Our whole community was very poor," she said.

"We learned to help each other. All the good things that people did for me, I can't pay all of them back but I sure can pay it forward."

Once, when state funding was cut for a displaced homemakers program administered by the Women's Resource Center, Hight's passion paid

off, literally. "We were scrambling around trying to figure out what to do," she recalled. "I said, 'You know, I just can't take this. We need to go to Lansing.'"

So she took a vacation day from work to lobby legislators. The funding was restored.

The oldest of six children, Hight graduated from Central High School and then, as the first person in her father's family to attend college, earned a degree in business administration from Western Michigan University.

She landed her first permanent job as an employment and training specialist in the Model Cities Program, which later evolved into Michigan Works!

Hight spent 16 years working at the Area Community Service Employment and Training Council negotiating and administering contracts. In 1992, she brought those skills to City Hall and has seen her duties expand.

As manager of all support functions for non-technical aspects of city street and building projects, Hight had a big hand in the restoration of

Ryerson Library. As a member of the Grand Rapids-Kent County Convention/Arena Authority Building Committee, she helped structure contracts for construction of DeVos Place.

Hight also sits on the Utility Advisory Board, which oversees water and sewer service from Grand Rapids and its suburban customers. She recently was honored by her peers with election to trustee for the city of Grand Rapids Retirement System.

Hight knows that being a woman — and a minority — is uncommon in engineering, and she hopes younger women "don't shortchange themselves."

"Before I came to work here, I had very little knowledge of construction," she said. "I didn't know how is a subcontractor different from a supplier, and how is this term different from that term. I had a learning curve."

"I want to make certain that they know their role is valuable and that they can do the next level up."

E-mail: youllife@grpress.com

BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, INDUSTRY AND LABOR: KATHERINE HUMPHREY

She views life through lens of diversity

BY PAUL R. KOPENKOSKEY
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

Katherine Humphrey believes racial, gender and sexual orientation bias has no place at the community table.

She envisions a society where all people have access to affordable health services, all children are born into loving families and social justice is more than a buzzword battered at political campaigns.

The stuff of pipe dreams? The president and chief executive officer of Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan begs to differ.

"Planned Parenthood is, in many situations, the sole voice for comprehensive, medically accurate, sexually accurate education," said Humphrey, who oversees a staff of 60 at eight centers.

Diversity and inclusion aren't advertising slogans to Humphrey.

Through Planned Parenthood, she developed educational programs tailored to

"Change happens one person at a time. Each of us can make a profound difference."

— Katherine Humphrey

African-Americans, Latinos, American Indians, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Humphrey said she learned early to embrace diversity while growing up in Bethesda, Md., a melting pot of religious, ethnic, racial and sexual orientation inclusiveness.

Those values were a perfect fit when Humphrey assumed the helm of Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan 18 years ago.

"This organization defines diversity very broadly," she said. "I view life through that lens."

She went through a bit of

culture shock when she relocated here in the early 1970s.

"My experience was there was less appreciation of differences," she said.

But inroads to change are evident, Humphrey said. She points to progressive organizations she serves, some of which, she says, would have had the welcome mat pulled out from under them as little as 10 years ago.

Humphrey's community activism includes serving as co-chair of the Grand Rapids Rotary Club's Healing Racism Committee, co-founder of the Progressive Women's Alliance and past member of the steering committee that founded Gilda's Club Grand Rapids and the African American Health Institute.

"Change happens one person at a time," Humphrey said. "Each of us can make a profound difference. I don't need to see immediate results to see a difference."

Humphrey's passion for diversity has gained national attention, said Charles Burpee, a member of Planned Paren-

thood's board.

"The diversity plan that Kathy has developed for Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan has been recognized as a model for the 120-plus Planned Parenthood affiliates throughout the country," he said.

"Kathy's diversity leadership and plan resulted in Planned Parenthood being awarded the 2005 PPFA Regional Diversity Award and the 2006 PPFA National Affiliate Award for Excellence in Diversity," Burpee said.

Still, she says, misunderstandings remain lodged in pockets of West Michigan.

"One of the misconceptions with Planned Parenthood is with the issue of abortion," she said.

"Planned Parenthood does more to prevent the need for abortion than any other organization in the county. We're the sole source of health care for 25,000 women, 85 percent of them live below the poverty line."

E-mail: yourlife@grpress.com



PRESS PHOTO/JOHN M. BROWDER

Thinking big: In addition to her post as president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan, Katherine Humphrey serves on the Healing Racism Committee and co-founded the Progressive Women's Alliance

STUDENT HONOREE: LILY NGUYEN

A lot of heart – and talent, too

BY AARON OGG
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

Lily Nguyen was faced with a difficult choice: stethoscope or paint brush.

That's the problem with having a big heart and a ton of talent – it often doesn't all fit into one box. But the 17-year-old Kelloggsville High School senior is confident she can focus on one and not forsake the other.

"Since I was little, I wanted to help people," Nguyen said. "I was thinking it's more important to go into medical, and I can always do art as a side job."

While that might seem a lot to chew, consider Nguyen's current commitments: student congress, leadership club and middle school tutoring every Tuesday and Thursday, just to name a few. Not to mention a hectic home life.

With three younger siblings, and a Vietnamese father and Chinese mother who look to her to grasp the complexities of the English language, there isn't a lot of down time.

Yet somehow, she still manages to excel in her studies. Her grade-point average is first in her class, and school counselor Nora Wade remarked on Nguyen's desire to stack up as many Advanced Placement classes as possible.

"I love drawing people. When I look at a photo graph, there's always some kind of emotion to it."
— Lily Nguyen

"From the first time I met Lily, I was impressed with her," Wade said. "She has such a thirst for learning."

"It's not often I interview a student who says, 'I want more classes.'"

Nguyen's art teacher, Donna Lyle, has been impressed with the way she is able to heed fundamental concepts while making works uniquely her own.

"Lily is very independent and spontaneous with her ideas," Lyle said. "She takes one idea and expands it into a concentration of many ideas. She lets them grow, and is open to suggestion."

Her favorite subject? People, of course.

"I love drawing people," she said. "When I look at a photograph, there's always some kind of emotion to it."

But while the healing powers of art may be indisputable,

that passion soon will take a back seat to a more hands-on approach. Nguyen is applying to the University of Michigan and Grand Valley State University for premed, and hopes to become a pediatrician.

That drive was born of life experience. Sickness is an all-too-familiar fact of life as heart disease is prominent on her mother's side of the family, and severe allergies and asthma on her father's.

Nguyen, whose parents moved to the U.S. as teenage war refugees, will be the first in her family to attend college. They have instilled in her "good morals," and the importance of "a good education above everything else," she said.

Diverse culture also played a prominent role in her upbringing. Nguyen is bilingual – speaking fluent English and Vietnamese. She knew how to speak the latter, but begged her parents to buy her books so she could learn how to both read and write it.

Her family regularly celebrates Western and Eastern holidays, including the Moon Festival and Chinese New Year.

"You don't get presents (for Chinese New Year), but you get money in these little red envelopes," she beamed.

E-mail: yourlife@grpress.com



A passion for people: Lily Nguyen displays works she has done for her Advanced Placement art class at Kelloggsville High School.

PRESS PHOTO/ADAM BIRD

2006 TRIBUTE AWARD WINNERS

ADVOCACY
Karen Henry

Executive Director-- Grand Rapids Weed & Seed

ARTS
Lori Tennenhouse

Artistic Director--Grand Rapids Women's Chorus

BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, INDUSTRY & LABOR
Katherine Humphrey

President/CEO--Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan

COMMUNITY SERVICE
Dianette Hight

Engineering Services Administrator -- City of Grand Rapids

PROFESSIONS
Olivia Margo Anderson

Board of Trustees--Grand Rapids Community College

SPORTS, FITNESS & WELLNESS
Carolyn Heines

Owner/Teacher--The Yoga Studio

STUDENT HONOREE
Lily Nguyen

Kelloggsville High School

The Grand Rapids Press joins the YWCA of West Central Michigan in saluting Tribute Award recipients and their commitment to our community.

This year's winners join more than 150 leaders and trailblazers the YWCA has recognized with Tribute Awards since 1977.

We thank each of you for what you've inspired others to become.



PAYING TRIBUTE TO WOMEN



PRESS PHOTOS/EMILY ZOLADZ

Karen Henry, left, of Grand Rapids, receives a hug of congratulations from Joy Wellington, of Grand Rapids, after receiving the YWCA Advocacy Tribute Award for contributing to social awareness in the community. Henry and six other women were recognized at the YWCA Tribute Awards Celebration held Tuesday at DeVos Place in downtown Grand Rapids. Also on Tuesday, Dianne Hight, engineering and services administrator for Grand Rapids, walks to the stage to receive her award for community service.