



# FEW

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OF WOMEN IN THE GOVERNMENT

# NEWS & VIEWS

MAY/JUNE 2024



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### A Story of Revival, Resurgence and Reinvigoration!



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# President's Message:

## Pride for FEW's Veterans and LGBTQ+ Members



*Pride* is a word often heard in both the military and LGBTQ+ circles. FEW is an organization that supports both. How does the notion of *Pride* impact each of these groups and how can we better serve our members in both communities?

The word *Pride* has several helpful definitions. According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary, one such meaning is, “consciousness of one’s own dignity.” Merriam Webster adds a different emphasis with, “pleasure that comes from some relationship, association, achievement, or possession that is seen as a source of honor, respect, etc.”

As a woman in the military and now in federal civilian service, I personally and professionally relate to both definitions of *Pride*. Overcoming barriers (such as gender stereotypes) women expect to experience in the armed forces, I am aware of my own dignity as I pushed through every display of discrimination and every injustice. *Pride* in myself and what I knew I could accomplish allowed me to patiently earn the trust of my U.S. Army platoon. I am proud of my military service and achievements, as I am proud of each of you who has served your country in this capacity.

For those of you in the LGBTQ+ community, you know too well your own experiences of injustice, discrimination, and displays of hatred in and out of the workplace. And yet, each of you continue to rise with a zest for life and a tenacious spirit. You remind us of the continual need for advocacy; the colorful rainbow flag gives us a clear picture of the diversity we all aim for. I am proud of each of you for understanding your own worth and challenging the status quo.

We have learned that our allyship makes us stronger, as we work to eliminate inequity in the federal workplace. Let’s continue to amplify all our unique voices. During May, we lift up the work and service of our active duty and veteran members. In June, we honor the lives and legacies of our LGBTQ+ colleagues. None of us are alone as we continue with the bold grassroots efforts of FEW. While we place a special emphasis during these months, we know the fight for equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging continues every day, all year long.

**Happy Military Appreciation Month! • Happy Pride Month!**



Yours in Service,

***Pamela H. Richards***

National President

Federally Employed Women

# Hōkūle‘a – Star of Gladness

## A Story of Revival, Resurgence and Reinvigoration!

By Lisa Keakalaulono Zimmerman, Western Region Manager



Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month is observed annually in May to celebrate their contributions to American history, society, and culture.

My name is Lisa Keakalaulono Zimmerman. I am a Native Hawaiian. My Mom Damian Kalehuaonawawa Dart was born on the Big Island of Hawai‘i. I am named after my grandmother Elizabeth Keakalaulono, and my great-great grandmother Keakalauolono Keli‘iho‘omalū, who was still alive when I was born and gave my mother permission for me to be named after her. My great-great grandfather was Harry Keli‘iho‘omalū, the Deputy Sheriff of Puna, a very tall handsome Hawaiian man on horseback. My grandfather William G. Dart was born in Maui, he was from Hana and Kaupo. He was a cowboy, a blacksmith, a foreman, an engineer with Hilo Electric Company who saved many people in Hilo during the tsunami, and he and my grandmother pastored the Hilo Door of Faith church on Kaumana Drive in Hilo.

My grandparents and great-great grandparents spoke Hawaiian. My grandfather would teach me Hawaiian in the kitchen while he cooked his guava jam over the stove in Hilo. My grandparents taught us about Hawaiian sustainability and conservation, and values of taking

what you needed, not overfishing, or taking more than you needed from the land and sea. My mother taught me about ‘ohana and had me memorize family names.

During my mother’s time, their generation was not allowed to speak Hawaiian. They would get in trouble if they spoke their native tongue Hawaiian at school. Due to many restrictions, the Hawaiian language almost became extinct. Native dance and culture went underground, and Native way-finding techniques were lost.

About 50 years ago, a group decided they would build a Hawaiian canoe, [the Hōkūle‘a, Star of Gladness](#), and revive and use only native way-finding techniques, they would make over a 2,500-mile long-distance ocean voyage using the stars, the winds, the clouds, the birds, the swell, the memory, as their ancestors had done, and prove that Polynesians didn’t accidentally arrive in Hawaii. They would navigate a voyaging canoe to Tahiti without instruments. The canoe was the Hōkūle‘a, the Hawaiian name for the star Arcturus.

By the time of the voyage in the ‘70s, Navigation by the stars was lost in Hawaii. They had to find a Master Navigator who still knew the old ways and would be willing to teach the Hawaiian crew. Navigator Pius “Mau” Pīailug, a Micronesian was willing to teach them the ways. He was

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one of only six PWO master navigators left. To do this, he broke with tradition that wayfaring knowledge was strictly held and passed down in the familial lineage of a navigator. And he was teaching non-Micronesians.

**In 1976, Hōkūle‘a’s first voyage to Tahiti was a success.**

When Hōkūle‘a arrived in Pape‘ete Harbor, half the island’s people (17,000) showed up to greet the canoe.

This experience of restoring our native ways, reenergized Hawai‘i. Language immersion schools began teaching native Hawaiians their language. Student’s parents started speaking Hawaiian in the home. If they were in a generation that had lost the language, they learned too, and conversed in Hawaiian at home. A resurgence of culture, and dance, and the arts filled the land, and the hearts of the people.

On June 15, 2023, Hōkūle‘a and her sister canoe, Hikianalia, set off for a 43,000-nautical-mile circumnavigation of the Pacific Ocean. This trip is set for 4 years, and 100 indigenous territories. The crew members (400) take turns to “man the canoes”. However, there are many women crew members. Hōkūle‘a’s first female captain and navigator Lehua Kamalu was the captain and navigator of Hōkūle‘a on the voyage along Kealaikahiki (Road to Tahiti) in April 2022.

The protocol for every harbor is that the crew of the Hōkūle‘a (and her sister canoe, Hikianalia), ask for permission from the Native Peoples of that area to come on their land. They are greeted by the people in dance, song, or chant, and then they each exchange gifts. Native Hawaiians are drawn to the Hōkūle‘a! They come from all over to greet her, as if she is a part of their ‘ohana. She beckons to them from across the ocean. I know that on the other side of the ocean in Hawaii, my cousin Pat Kahawaiola’a sent her from Hilo with a chant. I know that on another trip, my cousin Kasia Makahanaloa greeted her in Sand Island. I welcomed the Hikianalia when she came to California a few years ago.

This year, I welcomed Hōkūle‘a as she came into Ventura Harbor. She was greeted by outrigger canoes, and sailboats, and kayaks, and people on surfboards, and from the Native People of Ventura, and the Hula Halau who offered gifts of dance to the crew. The crew reciprocated with song, dance, and chant.

Post-Pandemic, the Hōkūle‘a is a great reminder to us of reclaiming what was lost. Of having a vision, finding your star, charting your course, and Restoring our Gladness!

Aloha and Mahalo!

Lisa Keakalaulono Zimmerman, Western Region Manager



Pamela H. Richards  
National President



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# How Serving as a Marine Developed Me for My Future

By Cindy Higgins, Regional Manager, Pacific Northwest Region

**Ms. Marge Roe shared her story with her niece, Cindy:**

I was very interested in being a Marine from the time I was eight years old. I read the daily newspaper as frequently as I could, and I became quite politically charged. This helped me become more educated yet caused me to develop a strong desire to make my own decisions.

I always considered the Marine Corps to be the best, and always wanted to be the best at everything. I did not like President Harry S. Truman because he wanted to do away with the Marine Corps. My desire to become a Marine never wavered and as I prepared to graduate from high school, I also prepared to enlist in the Marine Corps.

I wanted to be able to go to college and I felt that to be very fulfilling. My Marine Corps dream would also enable me to go to college without financially impacting my parents. My family began to believe that I would do exactly what I had always said I would do.

I graduated, enlisted, and left for Parris Island, South Carolina, in June 1958. I needed a place to finish growing up, and some discipline too, and boy did I get both! On the way to Parris Island, I traveled through several southern cities where I became acutely aware of the prejudice in the south against African Americans. Being from Washington state, I had never been subjected to this and it instilled in me a dislike for the south, which I have had a hard time overcoming even to this day.



Ms. Marge Roe, United States Marine Corps

I learned what it took to earn the right to wear the Marine Corps insignia and I still remember the pride I felt when I had earned the right to wear it. Incidentally, I also learned in Boot Camp that the letters “LSMFT” on the Lucky Strike cigarette pack meant “Lord, Save Marines From Truman.”

I was lucky enough to be assigned to the Marine Corps Recruiting Depot (MCRD) San Diego, California, as my permanent duty station. My Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was as a Warehouseman. We were always told we were a Marine first, our MOS was secondary.

I received several honors in the Marine Corps. I served as the Guidon Bearer and was chosen to represent the Women Marines at the Marine Corps “Birthday Ball.” I considered each one to be a great honor and represented my unit to the fullest. The Marine Corps is the oldest military service, and I will never forget the Marine Corps birthday – November 10 – not even to this day.

After my honorable discharge, I attended college and started my career in law enforcement. My time in the Marine Corps prepared me more for my job than my college education did. I retired after 30+ years as a Probation and Parole Officer for both juveniles and adults in the Washington state Department of Corrections.

Entering the Marine Corps was the best decision I ever made in my life and one that I feel the most pride in because it made me who I am today. ***Once a Marine, Always a Marine!***



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# VETERANS SYMPOSIUM

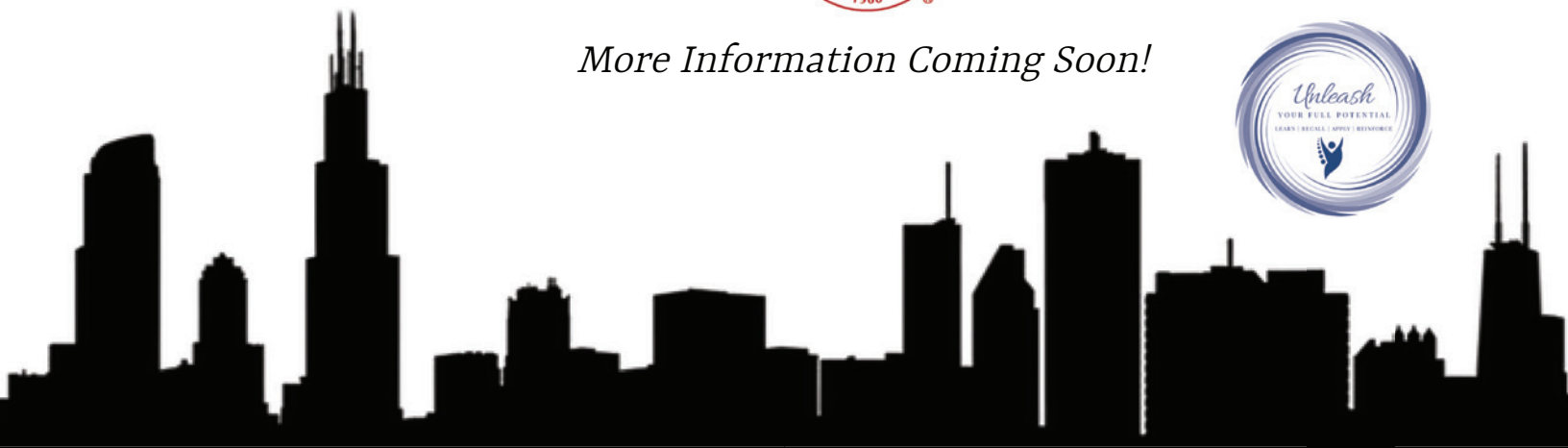


Pamela H. Richards  
National President



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*More Information Coming Soon!*



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# The FEW Foundation Recognizing and Honoring Our Veteran Members

We all know there are special days set aside to honor our veterans: Armed Forces Day in May to honor all those men and women who are currently serving on active duty. Toward the end May, there is Memorial Day which honors all who were killed while on active duty. Then in November we honor everyone who ever wore a uniform.

Did you know there is another day which recognizes Women Veterans? June 12th has been designated as Women Veterans Appreciation Day. This date coincides with the signing of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act 75 years ago by President Truman in 1948. While not yet considered a Federal Holiday, several states currently recognize their women veterans. The FEW Foundation for Education and Training is proud to salute the Foundation's Women Veterans – Ann Garber, Maggie Gaukler and Gloria Sherman.



**Ms. Ann Garber**, is a FEW Foundation Trustee, she joined FEW in 1990 and is a Diamond Lifetime Member. She is a member of Mid-Continent Region where she has served as Regional Manager and Region Ways & Means Chair. Additionally, she has

been active in her local FEW Chapter where she served as Chapter President. Ann attended her first NTP in 1991 and has served on seven NTP planning committees. She joined the FEW Foundation in 2014 and served as Chair for the Foundation Scholarships program.

Ann enlisted in the United States Navy in March 1974. Upon completion of recruiting training in Orlando, Florida, Ann attended Radioman "A" School in

San Diego, California. Her first duty station was NAVCAMSWESTPAC Guam. During her time in Guam, Ann shared, "When our former director Vice Admiral Sharp returned from a conference, he spoke of a young Rear Admiral that he'd met and spoken to. He'd asked him why he'd chosen to join the Navy. The young man then told Admiral Sharp that everyone had been so nice to his uncle and himself when they'd been evacuated from Vietnam and arrived on Guam. This brought back memories for me. "Naval Communications Master Station West Pacific" was my first Duty Station I was detailed to the "Naval Air Station Agana" Communication center. I was on duty the day the airplanes started arriving on Guam with the refugees.

When I got off duty I caught up with my roommate and we went to the dining hall to volunteer to help in any way that we could. After a short conversation we decided to make a big ole pot of an American favorite classic meal, that would feed a lot of people; "Chicken Noodle Soup". We took the soup to the compound that evening and served dinner to the refugees. We continued to assist and volunteer when and where we could at the dining hall. We also, helped with making box meals for the personnel standing guard around the two compounds. During the time I was in the Communication Center I was typing and sending messages to get sponsors for the refugees to get to the mainland."



Ann was transferred to the Naval Air Station where she served as a Women's Prison Guard. She is a former computer operator, company commander and worked at the Women's Prison Guard for the U.S. Navy. Additional

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military tours included Adak, Alaska, Lemoore, California, and Memphis, Tennessee. Her last duty station was NAVCAMSMED, Naples, Italy. Ann left military service in 1982 and went to work for the government in the Federal Civil Service.



Corporal Margaret Gaukler,  
U.S. Marine Corps

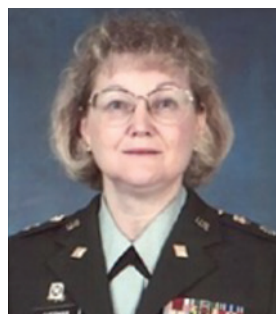
Our administrative and support specialist **Ms. Margaret (Maggie) Gaukler** has been with the FEW Foundation Board since 2017, and has held the Secretary position most of her time on the board. She has worn many hats as a FEW Diamond member, and during her 34 years of FEW membership she has worked FEW's three-tiered

organization; at the Chapter level; as Chapter President, Vice President, and Secretary; and covered vacant positions as needed for the continued success of the chapter; Regional level; as Regional Manager, Assistant Regional Manager, and Secretary; at National level; as Secretary, and various stents in volunteer positions on the National Training Program (NTP) committee, as Volunteer Coordinator, Assistant Volunteer Coordinator, she stepped up to assist with crowd and ticket control for ticketed events; back-up for the informational and referral desk, as well as back-up for the registration desk.

As a young 18-year-old heading off to college to pursue a teaching degree; she discovered a mere 8 weeks before graduation that teaching wasn't her cup of tea. Facing a major fork in the road with no plan B, she worked various jobs while trying to find her niche. Fast forward to mid-1975 when she started looking into a military career. Looking for a job in the medical or food services areas, Maggie visited the Army, Air Force and Navy recruiters' offices but, was told there were no openings for at least a year. While walking out of those offices to clear her head, and realizing she did not want to wait a year, she walked a short distance and into the Marine Corps Recruiting Office. There she was immediately taken to see a woman

Marine recruiter. Maggie liked what she was hearing about the Marines and was even told that she would be guaranteed a Food Service MOS (Military Occupational Specialty), which was one of her dream jobs. In January 1976, she found herself standing on yellow footprints at the entrance of the Woman Recruit Training Battalion, Parris Island, South Carolina. Maggie, said she stopped for a minute or two, to question her decision to become a United States Marine at age 27. But a "FEW" minutes later she was signing on the dotted line and from that day forward Maggie was a member of the United States Marine Corps. Hard work and determination saw her through 8 weeks of various phases of Marine indoctrination and on March 8, 1976, she proudly received her Eagle, Globe, and Anchor emblems. After attending Baker School in Jacksonville, North Carolina, she was assigned to Camp H. M. Smith Hawaii as a Baker in the mess hall. After 3 years of service, Maggie was honorably discharged. She decided to stay in Hawaii and joined Federal Civil Service holding numerous positions for another 36 years and into retirement.

If you speak to Maggie and the subject of Veterans comes up, she will proudly tell you, she is a Veteran of the United States Marine Corps and in her words "There is no Former Marine -- Once a Marine, always a Marine!"



Lieutenant Colonel, Gloria  
Sherman, U. S. Army

**Ms. Gloria Sherman** is the new Webmaster for FEW Foundation. Gloria has been a member of FEW since May 1999, and has held several positions within FEW's three-tiered organization; at the National level she served on the Board of Directors (NBOD) as the National Secretary from 2014-2018; and from 2018 - 2022 she was the National Webmaster. On the Regional level she was the Mid-Continent Regional Manager, from 2008-2016, and her second term from 2021-2022; Regional Representative 2005-2008, Regional Secretary 2003-2009, 2016-2020,

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and 2022-2024, Membership Chair 2002-2010, she held the Webmaster position from 2005-2024, Training Chair 2016 -2024, Finance Chair 2016-2024, and the Bylaws Chair/Pol Proc 2021-2022. At the Chapter level was she the President from 2001-2008, and later filled other positions that were vacant. She was President for Nebraska Heartland, 2021-2024

Gloria earned her Bachelor of Science in Business and received her master's degree in business administration in 1992, both from Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. Gloria is a retired Lieutenant Colonel (LTC), she began her military career as a Teletype Operator on Active Duty in 1974. After being assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Germany and Fort Riley, Kansas, she left Active Duty for an enlisted finance position in the Kansas Army National Guard. In 1982, she graduated from Officer Candidate School as Distinguished Academic Graduate from the Kansas Military Academy at Salina, Kansas.

She completed Finance Officer Basic and Advance Courses at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. Other military education includes Combined Armed Services Staff School, Command and General Staff College, Military Comptroller Course, Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Officer Course, Information System Security Officer Course, and Defense Decision Support Course.

She maintains her Certified Defense Financial Manager certification. Her last assignment was the Comptroller for Joint Forces Headquarters, Kansas Army National Guard in Topeka, Kansas in June 2010.

Her awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with Third Oak Leaf Cluster, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Kansas National Guard Service Medal with Sunflower Device, and Kansas National Guard Commendation Ribbon.

She is a lifetime member of the Association of the United States Army, a perpetual member of the Military Order of the World Wars, a life member of the Association of Military Comptrollers, and a diamond lifetime member of Federally Employed Women, where she was recipient of FEW's Military Meritorious Service Award in 2010.

The FEW Foundation, along with the FEW National Office, proudly acknowledges, celebrates, and pays tribute to all our Veterans! To the Veterans of America – we acknowledge your Duty, your Honor, and your service to our Country. We salute you, our Heroes!

# One Simple Thing Can Change Everything



Hello! I believe in the principle of *One Simple Thing*. That is, if we can identify and accomplish one essential, meaningful, and simple act every day with intention and integrity, we can achieve great things, both individually and collectively. This is a different way of thinking and acting, to be and do your best, one simple thing at a time.

Here's how you get started. With each piece I will be offering 5 simple tips. What resonates with you? What is relevant right now? And how do these ideas support you on your own professional path? Keep notes if you like, feedback is always welcome, and I hope you will share your own experiences. And please feel free to reach out to me anytime with a question, idea, or request. Good luck and remember: Simple is NOT the same as easy! Mallery Tytel, [mtytel@healthy-workplaces.com](mailto:mtytel@healthy-workplaces.com)

- Make today about someone else; provide them with the opportunity to act upon their own ideas. Being there to support another can be a win-win. What can you both learn and gain?
- Stick-to-itiveness is just that: recognize what needs to be done today, remember why, and then see it through. It's a great feeling to complete what you have set out to do.

- In your own unique way, approach your responsibilities today as an opportunity to make a real difference. Look around and recognize the other heroes and champions around you, too.
- Spend some time reaching out to others with your own voice and ideas; and then open your mind and ears to the visions and solutions of others. What can you each learn?
- *“I never grew up in an environment where I even heard the words ‘glass ceilings.’ You could always be anything you wanted to be if you worked hard. And so, I never felt constrained. I never felt that there were limitations on what I could do.” ~Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody, the first woman in U.S. military history to achieve a four-star officer rank.* Imagine what can be achieved if you believe there are no limitations on what you, too, can do.

Dr. Tytel is President of [Healthy Workplaces](#), a national consulting practice, and Co-Founder and Chair of [The Simple Rules Foundation](#). She has been a member of FEW since 2017.



## Understanding Mental Health: How the Blue Cross and Blue Shield® Federal Employee Program Supports Our Female Federal Workforce and Those Who Have Served

Mental health is just as important as being physically fit. But, unlike a broken arm or a cold, it's not something you can easily see. This can make mental health tricky to understand and deal with, especially for veterans who have gone through a lot during their service.

### Tackling mental health challenges

When uniformed service members come back from a tour or serving in a conflict, there are often many changes that can be tough adjusting back to, and everyday life. This can lead to feeling down, anxious or alone. Veterans might feel sad, lose interest in things they used to enjoy, have trouble sleeping or feel tired all the time.

### Who is therapy for?

Anyone. It's a common misconception that therapy is only for extreme cases. You can use it for:

- Improving relationships
- Finding yourself
- Feeling happier
- Alleviating stress

Therapy has been shown to be effective for specific, long-term mental health conditions, too. Long-term therapy can be effective at reducing specific symptoms and personality changes, including:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Trauma
- Grief
- Trouble sleeping
- Substance abuse

These are signs that they need some support and care for their mental health. And for veterans dealing with mental health challenges, the message is clear: You are not alone.



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# Telework in 2024: Employee Rights and Agency Expectations

As outlined by the Telework Enhancement Act, the decision to participate in agency telework programs is left up to the employee, assuming they are eligible. However, if an employee decides to participate in their agency's teleworking program, there may be subsequent work requirements they must follow.

As necessary, agencies may direct employees to return to the office (RTO) to remain in compliance with Executive Branch policy or follow through with RTO procedures following the decline of the threat of COVID-19. As such, if an employee were to fail to report to the office without an acceptable reason, they could be considered absent without leave and could be subject to disciplinary action, including, in some cases, removal from federal service.

Being said, with the popularity of telework and remote work and the desire to retain qualified talent, [OPM guidance](#) indicates that agencies should consider if other options are appropriate to offer to employees to continue teleworking—whether it be on a temporary basis or as they were prior.

Unfortunately, employees alone have very little to no legal power to push back against agency calls to return to the office. There are many avenues that employees can—and



already have used to some success—to try and stave off these calls to return to the office, mostly in the form of unions and collective pressure.

As such, employees who are looking to [continue teleworking in 2024](#) should stay in contact with their managers and stay abreast of any new developments to remain in compliance and advocate for workplace benefits that best serve their individual needs.

*Tully Rinckey PLLC is one of the nation's largest federal sector labor and employment, security clearance, and military law firms, serving clients across the U.S. FEW and Tully Rinckey have a Memo of Understanding, and with this agreement, FEW*

*members are entitled to one free half-hour telephone consultation each year with one of Tully Rinckey's experienced attorneys concerning federal employment, military and security clearance matters including discrimination claims, adverse action appeals, and veterans' benefits, to name a few. In addition to the attorney consultations, members who pursue their legal claims with Tully Rinckey will be entitled to a 10 percent discount in legal fees. For more information or to schedule a consultation with a Tully Rinckey attorney, please call (888) 529-4543, or visit [www.tullylegal.com](http://www.tullylegal.com).*

# Calling All Leaders: Join the FEW National Board!



Are you ready to lead and make a difference? The FEW National Nominations Committee is now accepting applications for the 2024-2026 FEW National Board of Directors (NBOD). If you're passionate about shaping the future, this is your chance!

**Apply Now:** Visit the News Center tab on our [website](#) and click on "National Nomination & Election" to get your nomination forms.

## What's in a Nomination Packet?

- Nomination form
- Professional biography
- Campaign flyer
- Photograph

Submit your completed packet by **May 27, 2024, 5:00 p.m.**

**ET.** There are no extensions, so don't miss the deadline!

Candidates will be notified by June 1, 2024, regarding their eligibility. If you're eligible, get ready to make an impact!

For more details, [visit our website](#) and download the forms. We can't wait to see the amazing leaders who will join us!

## Eligibility requirements:

- Shall be current or retired employees of the federal government or the District of Columbia and members in good standing for at least the past three (3) consecutive years and remain current for the term of office.
- Shall have held an elected or appointed office at the Chapter, Regional, or National level for at least one (1) term.
- Candidates for National President shall have served as a member of the National Board of Directors (NBOD) for at least the previous two (2) years and in congruence with the nature and mission of the organization the candidate may only be a Federally Employed Woman.
- The candidates for the position of Treasurer shall have a minimum of two years' experience in some aspect of financial management. This may include serving as treasurer of an organization, budget work, analyst, bookkeeper, financial investments, business manager, forecasting, internal controls reviewer, etc.



# Reflections Gleaned from Four Decades of Nominations

By Marcia McDaniels, Diamond Life Member, Great Lakes Chapter, Great Lakes Region

Elections are coming up and we all wait to see who will be nominated to carry the organization to future success. Who will run? Who will we choose to follow? Are our values matched? I remember my first chapter election. My President Julia Abbington approached me after a meeting and asked me to run for an office. I was a GS-5 intern and unsure as to why I should serve. She said I would be wonderful for the job of Chapter Recording Secretary. I remained uncertain. I recall her dark eyes gleamed as she looked me in the face. “Of course you can do it!”

I knew she would support me, and I accepted my mentor’s belief in me. Not everyone gets support like that these days. Often, self-nomination is standard for some elected offices, as you must have previous experience. As with resumes, who knows better than you what you are capable of in terms of commitment, time, energy, wardrobe, support, and other resources. When is it time to step up and say, “Of course I can do it!”

Building confidence in skills takes time. That may mean gaining experience on solo projects, teams, committees, or planned events. All such experiences can help a

person grow. I have run for an NBOD position and lost. I took hints from that: what needs more effort next time; who needs to know my abilities to support me; how to be proud to market my brand to the voting audience. I understand what role I can fill and remain comfortable being myself.

Every serving member needs to develop inspiration. Following procedures, directions and established standards maintains the status quo. Being a good Chapter or Regional Board or NBOD member means generating innovative ideas to improve the organization. Situational awareness helps to meet new obstacles and challenges. Plenty challenges abound.

The reward is personal growth for those who tackle personal challenges. If you want more purpose and meaning, try a new role. Something that will stretch you to fill the role with skills, talents, and your ideas. You can put extra zest in your life by renewing commitment to a group whose purpose excites you. Then watch your efforts make you grow as FEW grows.

You can say to being nominated, “Of course I can do it!”



# From Stay-at-Home Mom to Federal Employee:

## The Inspiring Journey of Talita Dreis

When Talita Dreis moved from Sao Paulo, Brazil, to Maryland in 2009, she left behind a career in airline marketing and a life she knew well. Her transition to the United States marked the beginning of a new chapter, one that would see her transform from a stay-at-home mom to a thriving federal employee.

Talita's first visit to the United States was in 2002, when she came to study English. She then returned to Brazil, where she earned her undergraduate degree in Communications from Methodist University. With a solid background in airline marketing, she relocated to Maryland to join her spouse, a U.S. Marine Veteran, and start a new life. Along with raising their children, Talita was determined to pursue further education and career opportunities.

In May 2023, Talita joined Federally Employed Women (FEW). Despite not being employed at the time, she was motivated by FEW's commitment to compliance and legislative advocacy, as well as its support for diversity and training opportunities. This decision would prove to be a turning point in her career.

As a recent graduate with an MBA from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Talita was eager to transition into the workforce but faced the challenge of an employment gap due to her years as a stay-at-home mom. This is where FEW's mentoring program became invaluable. Ms. Stacey St. Holder, a mentor with FEW, reached out to Talita and arranged a situational mentoring session to



guide her through the job application process.

Ms. Laura Megan-Posch, another mentor from FEW, offered Talita personalized advice and support. She shared her own experiences as a federal employee, helping Talita to reshape her resume and craft a compelling cover letter. The encouragement and guidance Talita received from her mentors gave her the confidence to apply for federal positions through Handshake, a platform used by universities to

connect students with internships and job opportunities.

With the help of her mentors and her own persistence, Talita secured a position with the Department of the Navy as an entry-level contract specialist in a developmental program designed to enhance the professional knowledge and capabilities of personnel in the acquisition workforce. Already she has completed her first month as a federal employee!

Talita's future career goals include obtaining her certification from the Defense Acquisition University and reaching the full performance level in contracting. For Talita, the support she received from the Federally Employed Women's Mentoring Program, her university, her family, and her friends was instrumental in helping her navigate the challenges of returning to work. She hopes her story encourages others to pursue their dreams and never give up, no matter how difficult the journey may seem.

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