



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM

*Washington, DC*

# engaging & promoting Women in Leadership



The International Women's Forum of Washington, DC brings together some of the most accomplished women in America's capital city who lead in diverse fields and who share a common purpose in engaging and promoting women in leadership. Founded in 1982, the Forum was created when Alexandra Armstrong and Susan Davis brought together a group of 35 women who were pioneers at the top of their respective fields to connect, share success and failures, and have some well deserved fun.

The group has grown to nearly 250 leading women in politics, business, law, government, medicine, industry technology, the arts and sciences, and is an affiliate of the International Women's Forum (IWF)—the only organization of its kind in the world today representing women leaders in diverse fields whose mission is to further dynamic leadership, leverage global access to and maximize opportunities for women on five continents.

Annual programming includes opportunities for members to network, connect, and exchange ideas. The programs are substantive, interesting and fun, and often highlight individual members' areas of expertise. Examples range from a behind-the-scenes look at the U.S. Supreme Court with Justices Ginsburg and O'Connor, to a featured presentation about the U.S. Mint with its Director and IWF-DC member, Henrietta Holsman Fore, or a summertime lunch at Ris prepared by its executive chef and IWF-DC member, Ris Lacoste, and co-hosted by author Kitty Kelley.

# washington d.c. a Legacy of Leadership



*Elinor Guggenheimer and Eleanor Holmes Norton, key founders of The National Women's Forum.*



*Former president Susan Davis, who helped establish the International Hall of Fame.*

## Creating a Global Forum

In 1982, Elinor Guggenheimer of New York and Eleanor Holmes Norton of Washington, D.C. founded The National Women's Forum. Originally founded in New York, the Washington D.C. Forum was created shortly after, and quickly grew to include some of the most influential women in the nation. The founding members of the D.C. Forum instituted the policy of reciprocity that allowed the Forum to become a national, and then international, organization.

From its early days, the Washington, D.C. Forum has played a standout role in the development of the international forum. Susan Davis of Washington, D.C. served as president from 1985 to 1987 and was the catalyst for taking the organization global when it was incorporated as the International Women's Forum (IWF) in 1987. Another influential IWF member, Carol Cox Wait, served as IWF president from 1995 to 1997. Today the IWF includes affiliate forums in 26 nations.

## The International Hall of Fame

Davis also played a key role in creating the International Hall of Fame and was instrumental in making this annual program and global fundraiser a huge success. Jean Head Sisco, an IWF-DC member, chaired the Hall of Fame Committee and contributed greatly to this success through her international reach and contacts and her fundraising for the organization and this program.

The Hall of Fame is designed to honor and recognize leading ladies across career and country boundaries. Honorees include women like Margaret Thatcher, Audrey Hepburn, Betty Friedan, Sally Ride and Heidi Klum.

# washington d.c. The DC Forum and IWF Grew Together

For its first fifteen years, the members of the DC Forum resisted any formal structure. Alexandra Armstrong functioned as de facto president, running the organization out of her office and providing the support needed to keep the group functioning. When the DC Forum finally agreed to elect officers, name committees and take the other steps an organization must as it grows and matures, Alexandra Armstrong helped shape the process that resulted in Linda Rabbitt becoming the first elected president of IWF-DC.



*Alexandra Armstrong  
IWF President for 15 years*

# writing a History of Influence

## 1980

**1982** The National Women's Forum was founded by New Yorker Elinor Guggenheimer and Eleanor Holmes Norton of Washington, D.C.

**1983** The Women's Forum of Washington, D.C. joined The National Women's Forum.

**1984** The National Women's Forum was officially incorporated.

**1985 – 1987** Susan Davis of Washington, D.C. served as president of the national forum.

**1985** Washington, D.C. hosted the first gala for the International Hall of Fame (induction of Sandra Day O'Connor and Sally Ride).

**1986** Washington, D.C. hosted the gala for the International Hall of Fame (induction of Clare Boothe Luce, Coretta Scott King and Margaret Thatcher).

**1987** Susan Davis took the women's forum global and this year, it was incorporated as the International Women's Forum (IWF).

**1987** Washington, D.C. hosted the gala for the International Hall of Fame (induction of Helen Hayes, Mathilde Krim, Corazon Aquino).

## 1990

**1991** Washington, D.C. hosted the gala for the International Hall of Fame (induction of Gro Harlem Brundtland, Betty Friedan, Katherine Graham).

**1993** Washington, D.C. hosted the gala for the International Hall of Fame, where Elinor Guggenheimer was awarded the IWF Founder's Award.

**1993** Carol Cox Wait, Lou Kerr and Carolyn Golding obtained a government grant of \$500,000 that started the successful International Fellows Program.

**1995 – 1997** Carol Cox Wait of Washington, D.C. served as president of the IWF, and initiated a program to grow the international enterprise.

**1999** Washington, D.C. hosted the gala for the International Hall of Fame (induction of Madeleine Albright, Dr. Ellen Li, Annie Leibovitz).

## 2000

**2005** Washington, D.C. hosted the gala for the International Hall of Fame (induction of Khatol Mohammadzai, Condoleezza Rice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg).

**2011** Washington, D.C. hosted the gala for the International Hall of Fame (induction of Madam Chen Zhili, Heidi Klum, Nandita Das and Anna Fendi).



*Marsha Johnson (Southern Company) & IWF Leadership Foundation Fellows & Alumnae at the 2005 World Leadership Conference & Gala.*

*2005 IWF President  
Gay Cook with  
Washington, D.C.  
2005 Gala  
Co-Chairs  
Carol Cox Wait,  
Linda Rabbitt &  
Alexandra  
Armstrong.*



## Catalysts for the IWF Leadership Foundation Fellows Program

Carol Cox Wait and Carolyn Golding of Washington, D.C. worked with Lou Kerr of Oklahoma to obtain a government grant of \$500,000 that kick-started the globally successful International Fellows Program in 1993. The program empowers young women leaders to break through the glass ceiling in any field.

In the early years, the Fellows program was heavily dependent on fundraising by Jean Head Sisco and Carol Cox Wait, drawing on IWF-DC for support. A grant from IWF-DC, the death of Jean Head Sisco, and a very generous matching grant from Arizona member Jeanne Herberger gave birth to an endowment campaign that eventually raised \$5 million. There are now seven named endowments for the Foundation and three of those were created by or named after IWF-DC members: Jean Head Sisco, Margita White and Federal Fellows.



## On the Board is the latest contribution made by IWF-DC

In 2012, due to the generous financial contribution made by IWF-DC member Linda Rabbitt to the George Washington University School of Business (GWSB), a unique joint venture between the GWSB and the IWF was launched, designed to prepare women leaders to become successful candidates for and directors on corporate boards.

## Hosting the World

Over time, the International Hall of Fame was included in the World Leadership Conference Gala. Washington D.C. hosted the first three galas, setting the precedent for this gathering of the world's most influential women. Since then, the IWF-DC has hosted the gala another five times.



Linda Rabbitt  
Former IWF President

*“Members come together to share knowledge and ideas,  
to enrich each other’s lives and to provide a network of support.”*

-IWF-DC Mission

### The Development of IWF’s Global Headquarters

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the International Women’s Forum and Leadership Foundation have had the benefit of enormous support from the Washington, D.C. Forum through the years. Originally housed in the offices of IWF-DC members, the global organization still receives much of its funding and support from D.C. members.



*IWF-DC Vice President and former President Jenna Dorn presenting  
at the 2011 World Leadership Conference.*

## washington d.c. IWF Presidents

<b>Alexandra Armstrong</b>	Chairman Armstrong, Fleming and Moore, Inc.
<b>Holly Cannon</b>	Principal Beveridge & Diamond, P.C.
<b>Suzanne P. Clark</b>	Chief Executive Officer Potomac Research Group
<b>June L. DeHart</b>	Partner Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP
<b>Jennifer L. Dorn</b>	President and CEO National Academy of Public Administration
<b>Michela English</b>	President and CEO Fight For Children
<b>Linda D. Rabbitt</b>	CEO and Founder Rand Construction Corporation
<b>Rita Shapiro</b>	Executive Director National Symphony Orchestra
<b>Ann S. Stock</b>	Vice President Institutional Affairs John F. Kennedy Center

