



# YWCPA

YOUNG WOMEN'S COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

## *4th Annual Trailblazer*

### AWARDS LUNCHEON

*Celebrating 13 years of preparing young women to be the leaders of tomorrow!*

## SPONSORSHIP PACKAGE

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Wednesday, May 28, 2025

InterContinental Hotel | 6750 Main Street, Houston, Texas 77030





YOUNG WOMEN'S COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

4th Annual Trailblazer  
AWARDS LUNCHEON

# THE TRAILBLAZER LUNCHEON

The YWCPA Trailblazer Luncheon scheduled for Wednesday, May 28, 2025, at the InterContinental Hotel Medical Center is a fundraising event that celebrates the promising futures of the graduating class of Young Women's College Preparatory Academy (YWCPA) and honors the outstanding achievement of women in the Greater Houston area. The YWCPA Trailblazer Award has been named in honor of Dr. Polly Sparks Turner, Chair Emeritus of the YWCPA Advisory Council.

This year, we are proud to present the 2025 Dr. Polly Sparks Turner Trailblazer Award to Dr. Ruth Simmons. A pioneering leader in higher education, Dr. Simmons has broken barriers as the first Black president of an Ivy League institution and the driving force behind the first engineering program at an American women's college. A Houston native, she has remained committed to expanding educational opportunities and championing diversity in STEM.

We will also present the 2025 "Because of Her" Chairperson's Award to Dr. Shawn Emerson Simmons. A steadfast advocate for STEM education, Dr. Simmons has mentored and inspired young women at Young Women's College Preparatory Academy (YWCPA) since 2012. Her leadership in STEM mentorship and educational equity has created lasting opportunities for students pursuing careers in science and engineering.

We are honored to recognize these extraordinary women for their transformative impact on education, leadership, and the future of young women in STEM.

Event proceeds support the work of the Young Women's Preparatory Network at Young Women's College Preparatory Academy in the Greater Houston area. Young Women's Preparatory Network is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that ensures female students gain the confidence and skills to apply, attend and graduate from college.



**Dr. Polly Sparks Turner**

*August 29, 1938 - March 30, 2023*

## ABOUT DR. POLLY SPARKS TURNER

A native Houstonian, Dr. Polly Sparks Turner attended Phillis Wheatley High School. She earned the Bachelor of Science degree from Texas Southern University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and both the Master's and doctorate degrees from The University of Texas School of Public Health.

Dr. Turner began her trailblazing career having served as the first African American Director of Pharmacy Services (in a majority hospital) at Beaumont City Hospital, Twelve Oaks Hospital and Doctors Hospital in Houston, Texas. She also served as the first Bureau Chief of Health Center Administration and the Office of Evaluation Services, City of Houston Health and Human Services Department. Dr. Turner was the first preceptor for Texas Southern University students.

Throughout her life, Dr. Turner led and inspired others through her service on UTHealth Development Board of Directors, as Chairman Emeritus at the School of Health Professions, The University of Texas Medical Branch, as an active member of the American Public Health Association, American Colleges of Healthcare Executives, Texas Allied Health Association, American Public Health Association, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Dr. Turner's legacy of leadership and service lives on and shines brightly through each and every scholar at the Young Women's College Preparatory Academy.



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## OUR HONOREES

### DR. POLLY SPARKS TURNER TRAILBLAZER AWARD



**Dr. Ruth Simmons**

Dr. Ruth Simmons, a distinguished academic leader and Houston native, has profoundly influenced higher education and championed diversity and inclusion throughout her career. Born in Grapeland, Texas, she moved to Houston's Fifth Ward at age six, where she excelled academically, graduating at the top of her class from Phillis Wheatley High School in 1963.

Dr. Simmons earned her B.A. in French from Dillard University in 1967 and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Romance Languages and Literatures from Harvard University in 1970 and 1973, respectively. In 1995, as President of Smith College, Dr. Simmons launched the Picker Engineering Program, establishing the first engineering program at an American women's college.

Dr. Simmons continued to break barriers by becoming the first African-American president of an Ivy League institution, serving as the 18th president of Brown University from 2001 to 2012. Her commitment to education and leadership led her to serve as President of Prairie View A&M University from 2017 until 2023.

Currently, Dr. Simmons is a Distinguished Presidential Fellow at Rice University and an Adviser to the President of Harvard University on HBCU Initiatives.

Dr. Ruth Simmons' visionary leadership and dedication to expanding educational opportunities have left an indelible mark on academia, making her a true trailblazer

### “BECAUSE OF HER” CHAIRPERSON’S AWARD



**Dr. Shawn Simmons**

Dr. Shawn Emerson Simmons, PhD, is a dedicated leader, mentor, and advocate for STEM education and equity, particularly for young women pursuing careers in science and engineering. Since 2012, she has been a steadfast supporter of the Young Women's College Preparatory Academy (YWCPA), mentoring students, guiding them toward STEM careers, and ensuring they have access to educational and career opportunities. As an advisory council member, she has played a crucial role in shaping sustainable programs that prepare students for success in college and beyond.

A proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® since her initiation into the Kappa Psi Chapter at the University of Oklahoma in 1990, Dr. Simmons has held numerous leadership roles at the chapter, regional, and international levels. She currently serves as the 27th South Central Regional Director, overseeing chapters across Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and New Mexico.

Dr. Simmons has received numerous accolades, including the Outstanding Women's Leadership Award, the University of Oklahoma Regents Award, the National Society of Black Engineers Golden Torch Award, and the Mattelia B. Grays Leadership Development Award. In 2024, she was honored by the Society of Women Engineers with the Advocating Women in Engineering Award for her exceptional contributions to STEM mentorship and advocacy.

Dr. Simmons' unwavering dedication to empowering young women in STEM and fostering equitable educational opportunities exemplifies the spirit of the "Because of Her" Award. Through her leadership, mentorship, and advocacy, she has created pathways for countless young women to succeed in fields where they have been historically underrepresented, leaving an enduring legacy of inspiration and impact.



YOUNG WOMEN'S COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

## 4th Annual Trailblazer AWARDS LUNCHEON

# ABOUT US

## YOUNG WOMEN'S COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

As a member of the Young Women's Preparatory Network (YWPN), YWCPA is an all-girls, 6th-12th grade school that ensures its young women have the access, opportunity, preparation, and confidence that they need to matriculate a four-year degree program.

Founded in 2011, YWCPA is located in the historic Third Ward community of Houston, Texas, and serves girls from all over the Greater Houston area. Over 60 percent of YWCPA students qualify for free and/or reduced lunch; and for them, the key to breaking the cycle of poverty is through education. Focusing on empowering girls and young women through educational opportunities, YWCPA offers a quality academic curriculum concentrating on rigor, STEM engagement, and college readiness.

Since the first YWCPA students graduated from high school in 2015, 100% of graduates have been accepted to a four-year college or university. Many will be the first in their families to attend and graduate from college. Collectively, YWCPA alumnae have been awarded over \$36 million in academic and merit-based scholarships for college. In 2020, the United States Department of Education named YWCPA a Blue Ribbon School, and US News and World Report has consistently ranked it in the top 100 high school programs in the state of Texas each year.



## YOUNG WOMEN'S PREPARATORY NETWORK

Founded in 2002, the YWPN is a nonprofit agency that partners with public school districts across the state of Texas to operate the largest network of all girls, public, college preparatory schools in the nation. Its schools are located in struggling urban neighborhoods and have proven to be very successful. The schools have won multiple academic achievement awards, including being recognized among the top public schools in Texas and the nation. The YWPN is a member of the Young Women's Leadership Network and the National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS).

YWPN formed the first public/private partnership with the Dallas Independent School District in August 2004, opening the Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School, the first all girls public school in Texas. Since then, YWPN has opened schools in Aldine, Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, Houston, Lubbock, Midland, San Antonio, and El Paso serving more than 4,600 young women annually.

## JOIN US FOR THE YWCPA TRAILBLAZER LUNCHEON TO:

- Celebrate our seniors as they prepare to graduate for college
- Recognize the Dr. Polly Sparks Turner Trailblazer Award recipient
- Fund programs for YWCPA students to gain the confidence and skills to apply, attend and graduate from college



# YWCPA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS 2023-2025

## **JOANNE HOWARD**

Principal, JLH Advisory  
Advisory Council Chair

## **LILIANA CRUZ**

Lead, Corporate Citizenship - Deloitte  
Advisory Council Vice Chair

## **DAVID FALCONER, JD, AIF®**

Senior Vice President, Manager-Funeral and  
Cemetery Trust Services – Regions Bank  
Advisory Council Secretary

## *Voting Members*

## **STEVE GRANSON**

HNTB/COMTO Houston Chapter President

## **BERNA GREER**

Revenue Agent, US Department of Treasury – IRS

## **TONI HARRISON**

Managing Partner & President Etched-Ten35

## **ARGENTINA JAMES**

President and CEO of HillDay Companies

## **ALAINA KING BENFORD**

Managing Attorney - King Benford Law Firm PLLC

## **JENNIFER LONG**

Director of Outreach and Engagement, YWPN

## **DR. NICOLE MCZEAL-WALTERS**

Dean of the Kolbe School of Innovation and Professional Studies,  
University of St. Thomas

## **MELANIE MILES**

The Law Office of Melanie Miles, PC

## **CINDY RYAN**

Chief Development Officer, Young Women's Preparatory Network

## **KIMBERLY SLAUGHTER**

Chief Executive Officer, SYSTRA USA

## **MELINDA SPAULDING CHEVALIER**

Vice President for Public Affairs, Rice University

## **KIMBERLY WILLIAMS**

Chief Innovation Officer, METRO

## *Non-Voting Members*

## **TIPHANY BURRELL**

Development Manager – Houston, YWPN

## **DR. TABITHA DAVIS**

Principal, YWCPA



**PRESENTING SPONSOR**  
**\$10,000**

### **SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS**

- One (1) Premier Table of \*Ten (10), Hosting Two (2) YWCPA Seniors
- Seated with Trailblazer award honoree and YWCPA Advisory Council Chair
- Opportunity to present the award to the Dr. Polly Sparks Turner Trailblazer Award honoree
- Verbal recognition from stage
- Sponsor name or logo in the event program, signage, step and repeat, and video loop
- Sponsor name or logo on table signage
- Recognition in pre- and post-event email and social media promotion
- Linked company logo placement on YWCPA website and social media platforms
- Placement of promotional item in senior gift bags and faculty welcome-back bags

\*A table of ten includes hosting two students. The sponsor will only need to invite eight guests.



**VALEDICTORIAN SPONSOR**  
**\$7,500**

### **SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS**

- One (1) Premier Table of \*Ten (10), Hosting Two (2) YWCPA Seniors
- Seated with Because of Her award honoree and YWCPA Class of 2025 Valedictorian
- Verbal recognition from stage
- Sponsor name or logo in the event program, signage, step and repeat, and video loop
- Sponsor name or logo on table signage
- Recognition in pre- and post-event email and social media promotion
- Linked company logo placement on YWCPA website and social media platforms
- Placement of promotional item in senior gift bags and faculty welcome-back bags

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## SALUTATORIAN SPONSOR \$5,000

## HONOR ROLL SPONSOR \$3,500

### SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

- One (1) Premier Table of \*Ten (10), Hosting Two (2) YWCPA Seniors
- Seated with YWCPA Class of 2025 Salutatorian and YWCPA Principal
- Verbal recognition from stage
- Sponsor name in the event program, signage, step and repeat, and video loop
- Sponsor name on table signage
- Recognition in pre- and post-event email and social media promotion
- Linked company logo placement on YWCPA website and social media platforms
- Placement of promotional item in senior gift bags and faculty welcome-back bags

\*A table of ten includes hosting two students. The sponsor will only need to invite eight guests.

### SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

- One (1) Premier Table of \*Ten (10), Hosting Two (2) YWCPA Seniors
- Verbal recognition from stage
- Sponsor name in the event program, signage, step and repeat, and video loop
- Sponsor name on table signage
- Recognition in pre- and post-event email and social media promotion

\*A table of ten includes hosting two students. The sponsor will only need to invite eight guests.

## SUPPORTER \$750

### SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

- Seating for two (2) guests
- Recognition in post-event email and social media promotion
- Recognition on the school's website





# 4th Annual Trailblazer AWARDS LUNCHEON

## SPONSORSHIP COMMITMENT FORM

(All correspondence sent to name below unless otherwise specified.)

Name of Company, Foundation or Individual \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company as it should be listed on promotional materials \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 Presenting Sponsor

\_\_\_\_\_ \$7,500 Valedictorian Sponsor

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 Salutatorian Sponsor

\_\_\_\_\_ \$3,500 Honor Roll

\_\_\_\_\_ \$750 Supporter

\_\_\_\_\_ I can't participate but would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (100% is tax deductible)

**Total amount:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Payment included** \_\_\_\_\_ **Invoice me**

Make checks payable to Young Women's Preparatory Network (please designate YWCPA)

### PAYMENT INFORMATION

Individual or Department to be billed: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of card: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Security code: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for helping educate and inspire our next generation of leaders!*