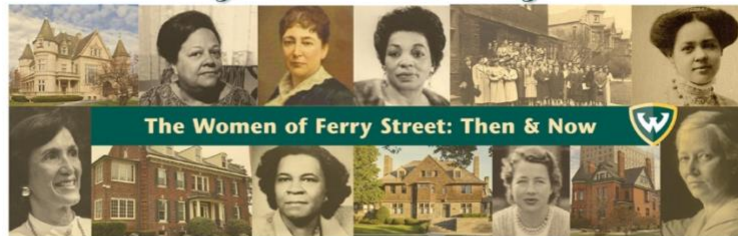


WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

## Celebrating Women's History Month



Clockwise from top left: Josephine Harreld Love, Lizzie Merrill Palmer, Violet Tucker Lewis, Bertha Hansbury Phillips, Mary Chase Perry Stratton, Eleanor Clay Ford, Rosa Slade Gragg, Judith Levin Cantor

### 2023 Honorees



Jacqueline Wilson  
Wayne State University  
First Lady

Ann Nicholson  
Merrill Palmer  
Skillman Institute  
Board Member  
Freer House Member

Nancy Tellem  
BasBlue  
Co-founder

Carla Walker-Miller  
Walker-Miller  
Energy Services  
Founder and CEO

Dr. Geneva Williams  
Michigan Women's  
Commission  
Vice Chair

Sue Mosey  
Midtown Detroit, Inc.  
Executive Director

## Wayne State University Celebrates Women's History Month with Ferry Street Event

DETROIT – The East Ferry Historic District, at the eastern edge of Wayne State University's campus, is lined with stately Victorian homes that reflect the legacy of its former residents, many of them women. In recognition of that special street and Women's History Month, WSU presents *The Women of Ferry Street: Then & Now*. Co-sponsored by WSU's [Division of Government and Community Affairs](#) and the historic [Freer House](#) (home of the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute), the March 23 event honors six Detroit-area women whose current achievements reflect trailblazing efforts by key historical women who worked or lived on Ferry Street.

Throughout the past century, some of Detroit's wealthiest industrialists, as well as middle-class Jewish and Black families, organizations and enterprises, occupied the unique homes on Ferry Street, with an exceptional presence of historic sites associated with women.

"Women have played significant leadership, advocacy and entrepreneurship roles on East Ferry Street for decades. *The Women of Ferry Street: Then & Now* will highlight those historic women," said Stacie Clayton, WSU director of community affairs. "We also will honor current women in the community who continue the legacy of preserving Detroit's historical and cultural treasures, promoting equity and achievement, and advancing the welfare of Detroit's children and families."

The 2023 honorees are Sue Mosey, executive director of Midtown Detroit Inc.; Jacqueline Wilson, first lady of WSU; Nancy Tellem, co-founder of BasBlue; Ann Nicholson, long-standing board member of Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute and the Freer House; Carla Walker-Miller, founder and CEO of Walker-Miller Energy Services; and Geneva Williams, Ph.D., vice chair of the Michigan Women's Commission. About 75 people are expected to attend the Freer House awards ceremony followed by a reception at [BasBlue](#), a women's membership and mentorship club in the restored Victorian home once occupied by Josephine Love.

Love, a Julliard graduate and arts advocate, founded Your Heritage House to nurture arts education in Detroit's children. She is one of eight women described in the program's video whose work brought local and sometimes national attention to Ferry Street as a center of the Jewish community and a hub of Black female entrepreneurship.

Judith Levin Cantor's grandfather was the rabbi of a major synagogue and lived on Ferry Street in the early 1900s. Cantor became a historian, archivist and exhibit curator dedicated to furthering awareness of Michigan's Jewish heritage. Businesswoman Violet Lewis started Detroit's Lewis College of Business on Ferry in the 1940s, training hundreds of Black women in the skills needed to break through racial barriers and acquire competitive jobs in Black businesses and white-owned industries. Bertha Hansbury Phillips trained more than 300 students at her School of Music, the first Black music school in Michigan. Women's and civil rights activist Dr. Rosa Slade Gragg established two landmarks on Ferry Street: Detroit's first Black vocational school, the Slade-Gragg Academy in 1947, and the Association of Women's Club building in the 1940s, which is still in existence.

Other notable women associated with Ferry Street are Lizzie Merrill Palmer, founder of what is now the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute; Eleanor Ford, one of Merrill Palmer's primary board members and supporters; and Mary Chase Perry Stratton, who founded Pewabic Pottery and became a close friend of Charles Lang Freer.

"The historic Freer House is honored to co-host this groundbreaking event," said William Colburn, director of the Freer House. "This event augments our dedication to promoting the preservation of the Freer House and the richly diverse history of the East Ferry Historic District."

Event co-sponsors are [BasBlue](#), Queen Lillian Development and Cinnaire.

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***The Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute for Child & Family Development** promotes and improves the well-being of children and families across the lifespan through research, education and outreach. The institute is housed in the Freer House built in 1892 by Charles Lang Freer, a Detroit industrialist and art collector whose collection is now housed at the Smithsonian. MPSI is part of **Wayne State University**, a premier urban public research university.*

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