Legends Award Reception
Thursday, April 13, 2017 | 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. | The Columns at One Commerce Square | 40 South Main Street

Announcing the 2017 Legends Award Honorees

The Legends Award pays tribute to women whose work embodies the mission of the Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis (WFGM). The award was created in 2009 to honor trend-setters, visionaries and innovators. The recipients have mastered their field and use their knowledge and skills to better the community. Nominated by their peers, a select group of women are honored each year through original art and prose that will tour the Mid-South with the Legends Award Art Exhibition. The pieces are created in a collaborative effort between an artist and a writer to represent the honorees’ life. There are now 63 Legends Award Honorees. A body of art and prose that communicates their strength, grace and vision are on permanent display at The Hall of Legends in the Baptist Memorial Hospital for Women.

Pat Morgan
CATALYST AWARD

Pat Morgan, a former banker, real estate broker, and elected official, has spent three decades working to break the cycle of homelessness locally, statewide, and nationally. She has received local and national recognition including awards from the City of Memphis and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. This mother of three and Arkansas native began her work with the homeless by volunteering at church. She worked to help develop and direct the Street Ministry for five years. Eventually, she received a Presidential appointment to the staff of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. Her work and journey are described in her book The Concrete Killing Fields, One Woman’s Battle to Break the Cycle of Homelessness, which has won five national book awards. Pat was executive director of Partners for the Homeless in Memphis – now known as the Community Alliance for the Homeless – from 1999-2010. In addition to leading efforts to coordinate, secure funding, and develop the local “Continuum of Care” system, her concern for homeless families with children motivated her to lead a collaborative effort with 60 executives of programs serving homeless and other underserved families with children. Her work inspired the report, The Elephant in the Living Room, which tackles the subjects of maternal substance abuse, trauma, and other on-going negative effects on infants and children, especially in the first three years of life. Though she retired in 2010, Pat continues her tireless crusade to end homelessness. In 2016, the Community Alliance for the Homeless honored Pat with an award for invaluable services to individuals experiencing homelessness in Memphis/Shelby County. She also serves on the Shelby County Juvenile Court’s Foster Care Review Board and is working on her second book, Return to The Concrete Killing Fields. The work she did in this community and continues to do has forever changed the way the homeless are treated and services for the homeless are provided.

Barbara Holden Nixon
INNOVATION AWARD

Barbara Holden Nixon, LCSW, has been a passionate, tireless advocate for children and families for more than 30 years. In 1991, this native Memphian founded the Prevention Wrap-Around Services Program for the Memphis and Shelby County Children’s Community Services Agency, where she then served as Executive Director until 2001. She later became the founding Director of the First Years Institute, a non-profit early childhood collaborative based at LeBonheur Children’s Medical Center. Barbara is a founder of the Shelby County Books from Birth, an affiliate of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, which promotes kindergarten readiness in Shelby County by providing age-appropriate books for all children from birth to age five. It is now
Edith Hickonbottom Kelly-Green was born in Oxford, MS and raised by her grandmother, Christine Mitchell Hickonbottom, who worked as a maid on the campus of the University of Mississippi. Mrs. Hickonbottom encouraged an early love of education in Edith, who was accepted to the University of Mississippi and majored in accounting. Post-graduation, she received a job offer in Memphis at Deloitte and Touche, one of the ‘Big Eight’ public accounting firms at that time. She was the first black professional employee at the firm and one of the first few women to be hired in the Memphis office. In 1977, Edith started working for Federal Express Corporation as a Senior Accountant. During her almost 30-year tenure there, she rose through the ranks, eventually becoming the first black woman to attain officer status at FedEx. After she retired from FedEx in 2003, the cancer survivor founded The KGR Group with her family, investing in real estate and food and beverage franchises. She and her family own six Lenny’s Grill and Subs in Memphis as well as Wimpy’s Burgers and Fries in Southaven, MS and Memphis. Edith was inducted into the Ole Miss Alumni Hall of Fame in 1999 and is the founding Chairman of the Women’s Council for Philanthropy at the school. Since 2000, she has started four scholarships: an endowed scholarship in honor of her grandmother, Christine Mitchell Hickonbottom; a second scholarship in honor of her mother-in-law, Marian Kelly Gordon; a third to the School of Accountancy; and a fourth in honor of her daughter, Jayna Michelle Kelly, MD, also an Ole Miss Graduate, for Biology majors. Edith is a founding board member of the Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis and Philanthropic Black Women of Memphis (PBWM). She is also a board member of Regional One Health Care System, BULAB Holdings (Buckman, Incorporated) and a past president of The Links, Incorporated, Memphis Chapter. Edith has been featured in Forbes Magazine and in Ebony Magazine as one of America’s Top African-American Executives.