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 69 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.

**ANNOUNCING THE 2019 LEGENDS AWARD HONOREES**

**Rev. Cheryl J. Beard**

**CATALYST AWARD**

Cheryl J. Beard has led missions and youth ministry for over 28 years, having served in both church and non-profit capacities. Prior to fulfilling her passion to work full time in ministry, Beard served as a city planner with the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development. In 1997, Beard was hired the Director of Missions and Youth Outreach for Olivet Baptist Church. She then became the Executive Director of the Urban Youth Initiatives, Inc. (UYI) in August 2001. During her tenure at UYI, Beard led efforts to support paid internships for more than 100 full-time youth leaders at more than 30 agencies serving at-risk youth across the city. UYI supported after-school tutoring, extracurricular activities, character development, technical skills training, legal remediation, and recreation to well over 11,000 youth. Beard was licensed as a minister of the Gospel at Olivet Fellowship Baptist Church in Memphis in 2001 and was ordained in 2013.

A 2007 Leadership Memphis graduate and alumnus of the New Memphis Institute Executive Program, Beard has volunteered on several boards and committees in service to the Memphis and Shelby County community. She is currently the volunteer CEO of The Rosa T. Beard Debutante Club Inc. in Augusta, Georgia. Started by her mother in 1963, the organization is dedicated to the leadership and cultural development of African-American high school girls.

**Claudia Haltom**

**CATALYST AWARD**

Claudia Haltom is the founder of the A Step Ahead Foundation, an organization she was driven to establish by her 17 years as a Juvenile Court Judicial Magistrate. Haltom saw and ruled on cases in which the parent was a single mother who had one or more babies before she was emotionally, physically, or financially prepared. Haltom resolved to devote her retirement to making sure all women had access to birth control so they could achieve their full potential. She has worked tirelessly to ensure that community clinics have been stocked with the most effective methods of birth control. Since 2011, the teen pregnancy rate in Memphis has dropped by more than 48 percent. In addition, A Step Ahead Foundation has conducted community outreach programs to educate young women about their bodies. The foundation has also worked provide scholarships for young women to use for technical or vocational or college education courses. To date, more than $500,000 in scholarships has been awarded. The program she designed and implemented has been replicated across the state of Tennessee with five other affiliates.

In 2018, Claudia served as a delegate at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Further, she has also received numerous awards including the William M. Leech, Jr. Public Service Award by the Tennessee Bar Association, the Girls, Inc. of Memphis BOLD Award and The Association of Women Attorneys Marion Griffith-Frances Loring Award.
Meri Armour  
**INNOVATION AWARD**

Throughout her career, Meri Armour has been committed to children, believing that all children deserve a healthy and safe childhood with the promise of a bright future. As President and CEO of Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital, Armour’s career has been marked with growth, discovery, and a steadfast commitment to that ideal. Under her visionary and innovative leadership, Le Bonheur has experienced an increase in funding and recruitment, and the hospital has received numerous accolades. The *U.S. News & World Report* Best Children’s Hospitals survey in 2018 ranked Le Bonheur in eight categories. Armour led the largest and most successful fundraising campaign in Memphis history – more than $104 million was raised to build a 255-bed, $340 million hospital. She now oversees efforts to raise a $100 million endowment to ensure Le Bonheur’s future. Recent highlights of Armour’s innovative leadership include the establishment of a Medical Legal Partnership designed to help Le Bonheur patients with legal issues around housing, guardianships, social security, and other circumstances. Le Bonheur’s Nurse Family Partnership program helps low-income, first-time mothers to achieve healthier pregnancies and births, stronger child development, and a path toward economic self-sufficiency.

Armour serves on the boards of University Le Bonheur Physicians, the Children’s Hospital Alliance of Tennessee, Urban Child Institute, Hospital Wing, and the Children’s Advisory Council for *U.S. News & World Report*’s Healthcare of Tomorrow. She also serves on the boards of Rhodes College and Tennessee Women’s Foundation and previously on the boards of the Children’s Hospital Association, Greater Memphis Chamber, Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis, Ballet Memphis, the Memphis Research Consortium, and the United Way of the Mid-South.

**LEGENDS AWARD ARTIST – Brenda Wiseman | LEGENDS AWARD WRITER – Faith Morris**

Dr. Indurani “Indu” Tejwani  
**PHILANTHROPY AND LEADERSHIP AWARD**

Dr. Indurani Tejwani has supported women and children in Memphis for over 50 years as an obstetrician and gynecologist. Tejwani began her career in 1968 during the Sanitation Workers Strike at the only hospital in Memphis for communities of color. There, she provided free medical care for low-income women in the African American and Indian communities. She started her own medical practice in the late 1970s. She has also provided medical care to women in developing countries and has been a champion for domestic violence prevention. During her career, Tejwani has delivered more than 6,000 babies. She is a strong advocate for reducing infant mortality rates and has worked tirelessly with the medical community and community partners to address systemic issues affecting those rates.

Tejwani first learned about the power of giving to the community as she watched her parents take a leadership role in the independence movement in India where it was taken for granted that one helped those who has less. She was one of the first women to be called upon by Mertie Buckman to participate and facilitate focus groups to establish the Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis. As a founding member of WFGM, Indu was one of the first to make a generous donation to support and lead the Foundation’s grant-making program. She embraced the mission through her leadership, philanthropy and service to the community. She stands strongly on her own values of equity, racial healing, diversity and inclusion and most of all well-being for all.

Through her involvement in the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPIOS), Tejwani has also provided mentoring and leadership support for young Indian medical students and doctors. AAPIOS seeks to facilitate and enable Indian American Physicians to excel in patient care, teaching and research and to pursue their aspirations in professional and community affairs. Also a founding board member of the Indian Community Fund of Greater Memphis, Indu continues to give her time, talent, and treasure to many local organizations, including the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, Ithe Children’s Museum of Memphis, and Memphis Medical Society.

**LEGENDS AWARD ARTIST – Jess Tinsley | LEGENDS AWARD WRITER – Joanna Crangle**

**WOMEN’S FOUNDATION FOR A GREATER MEMPHIS**

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