

Women's Leader Forum hosts 'Women who rule'

Lea Goodsell
Special to The Desert Sun

Women Leaders Forum of The Coachella Valley's "Women Who Rule" awards luncheon and scholarship fundraiser lived up to its name. With over 300 in attendance, the organization honored **Susan Murphy, Ph.D., Judy Vossler** and **Lisa Vossler Smith, Madeline Redstone** and **Carolyn Caldwell** at an event presented by Desert Regional Medical Center on January 29 at the Agua Caliente Resort & Spa.

The luncheon began with a champagne reception and lavish silent auction and then moved to a packed ballroom where KMIR's **Thalia Hayden** and **Janet Zapala** emceed.

WLF president **Deborah Tryon** welcomed the crowd and shared WLF's mission to educate, mentor and raise college scholarships for their Young Women Leaders who are beneficiaries of the luncheon.

Former President **Patti Gribow** and supporter **Helene Galen** introduced and presented the first award, The Helene Galen Excellence in Education Award, to **Dr. Susan Murphy**, who recognized her relatives in the audience, including her 96 year-old father who flew from the east coast.

Artist **Phillip K. Smith, III** and **Susan Stein** introduced Judy Vossler and Lisa Vossler Smith, with CVB executive director **Scott White** adding his congratulations to Judy and



From left, Women Who Rule Judy Vossler, Lisa Vossler Smith, Susan Murphy, Carolyn Caldwell and Madeline Redstone.

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pointing out the four tables of friends and co-workers there to support her. He also announced a \$1,500 scholarship CVB donated in her name. Daughter Lisa then gave a moving acceptance speech about her Mom, as Judy had done for her daughter. Definitely, and deservedly so, a mutual admiration society for these Desert Visionary Award winners.

Board member and managing director of the

Palm Springs Art Museum Palm Desert's **Arlene Amick**, shared more information about the WLF Young Leaders program and noted that 144 Coachella Valley high school girls are currently in the Young Women Leaders program. Many participants introduced themselves on stage proudly announcing their college destination - with Purdue, Berkley, UCLA, and ASU among the prestigious universities - and their majors which in-

cluded neurobiology and engineering.

The Mary T. Roche Community Leadership Award was presented by its namesake and WLF founder **Mary Roche** to Madeline Redstone, following introductions by Helene Galen and **Lynae Steinhagen**. Redstone spoke movingly of her work as a board member of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, just one among her many philanthropic endeavors.

The celebration con-

cluded with Carolyn Caldwell, president and CEO of Desert Regional Medical Center, who was introduced by her colleague and charming mentee **Ashley Vertuno**, before being honored with the WLF Inspiration Award presented by event chair **Lauren Del Sarto**.

She and the others, were applauded by Palm Springs mayor **Robert Moon** and other attendees, including **Mitch Blumberg, Patty Daly**

Caruso, Brian Harnik, Chris Mobley, Jamie Kabler, Theresa A. Mike Foundation, Jan Hawkins, David Brinkman, Jennie Inch and **Rachel Druten**.

The event raised nearly \$100,000 for its scholarships and programs.

The next WLF event is the "Your Personal Brand 101" on March 10. For more information about the organization and its events, please visit wlfdesert.org or call 760-837-7222.

Clinton Foundation's Health Matters 2016 summit

Dr. Mona Khanna
Special to The Desert Sun

EDITOR'S NOTE: With this article we say "welcome home" to Dr. Mona, whom many will remember as part of the inaugural reporting line-up at CBS Channel 2 when it went on the air in 2002. Her daily medical commentary was very popular. As a triple board certified physician television reporter, Dr. Mona's official title is Mona Khanna, M.D., MPH, FACP, FACPM, FACOEM, and she has won dozens of reporting awards, including an Emmy. Dr. Mona is now a medical director at Desert Regional Medical Center and a Desert Sun guest reporter.

It's not uncommon for high profile speakers to bow out of events and be replaced by lesser-known stand-ins. However, when the opposite happens, it's truly exciting, which is exactly what took place recently at the kick-off session of the Clinton Foundation Health Matters Summit.

Chelsea Clinton was supposed to launch the Coachella Valley Day of Action and moderate the opening Town Hall, but was snowed in in the Northeast. So a very well known political figure stepped in - her dad, **Bill Clinton**.

Today, the Clinton Foundation has 11 initiatives in the areas of global health, climate change, economic development, health and wellness, and girls and women. One of



Former President Bill Clinton, left, listens to panelists during the opening session of the fifth annual Clinton Health Matters Initiative Activation Summit in Indian Wells.

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the initiatives, Day of Action, took place at LaQuinta High School, where volunteers worked with students to plant vegetables and herbs for the LQ Blackhawk culinary program. Our own irreverent urban gardener **Stephen Lee** of Palm Springs coached a high schooler on building the foundation for nutrient-rich crops. "You take your soil and you squeeze out the moisture, and this is what you're planting in," tweeted Lee.

The two-day Summit, headquartered at the Renaissance Esmerelda in Indian Wells, convened

hundreds of health leaders from around the globe, including young **Anya Pogharian** from Quebec, who invented a portable dialysis machine costing about \$500, and two-time Olympic gold medalist, Women's World Cup champion and soccer player **Abby Wambach**, who spoke about improving girls' health through sports.

Tenet, the parent company of Desert Regional Medical Center, JFK Memorial Hospital and Hi-Desert Medical Center, is a five-time Summit sponsor. **Carolyn Caldwell**, CEO of Desert

Regional, said that Tenet Health donated \$1.5 million to increase awareness of and reduce HIV in the CV.

The Get Tested Coachella Valley program, has increased the number of testing sites by 244%.

David Brinkman, CEO of the Desert AIDS Project said, "Tenet and the Clinton Health Matters Initiative have brought attention to something that many people otherwise would not see as their issue... and have really helped normalize and routinize testing in healthcare."

Another initiative embraced by the Clinton Foundation is to make the drug overdose antidote *naloxone* widely available. Right now, Riverside County law enforcement doesn't carry the antidote, despite mounting pressure and a new state law that makes the drug overdose antidote available without a prescription. However, Riverside County activists are hoping to change that. Bill Clinton applauded new pharmaceutical sponsors of the initiative at the Summit.

The Coachella Valley and Little Rock, AR,

were the first two communities to become part of the Clinton Health Matters Initiative. The event follows the Career-BUILDER Challenge, a PGA TOUR event held January 21 - 24 in La Quinta. Local leaders who attended the Summit included Palm Springs Mayor **Rob Moon**, HARC CEO **Jenna LeComte-Hinely**, HARC President **Bruce Purdy**, La Quinta Mayor **Linda Evans**, La Quinta City manager **Frank Spevacek**, **Maureen Forman** of the Jewish Family Service of the Desert and Palm Springs City Council member **Ginny Foot**.

DESERT SCENE CONTRIBUTORS



BETTY FRANCIS
Director of Desert Scene, becha1@aol.com (760) 341-4080



TRUDY TEDDER
Associate Director of Desert Scene, desertsun@desertscene.com outlook.com (760) 332-8276



Madeline Zuckerman



Cara Van Dijk



Carissa Cascio



Joanne Hardy



Ann Greer



Lea Goodsell

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