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NEWS | Thursday, May 15, 2003

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Two women honored as role models

Cleckley, Layne receive awards for advancing women's causes in W.Va.

By [LEE ANN WELCH](#) - The Herald-Dispatch

HUNTINGTON -- Dr. Betty Cleckley and Margaret Mary Layne of Huntington have been recognized for their efforts to further women's issues in the state.

"They are good role models," said Wendy Thomas, chairman of the West Virginia Women's Commission. "Their accomplishments will serve as a standard for women."

Cleckley and Layne were two of the 2003 Celebrate Women Awards honorees by the commission. Cleckley received the Education Award and Layne the Mountaineer Spirit Award at a dinner and ceremony May 2 in Charleston.

Cleckley is vice president for Multicultural Affairs and International Programs at Marshall University. Layne is executive director of the Huntington Museum of Art.

"Even though we've made progress, there is still a need for an agency where women have a collective voice," Thomas said. The group serves all women of West Virginia, not just those working outside the home.

The role of the commission is to further issues of priority to women, Thomas said. The group meets quarterly and invites women to bring their concerns.

Among those issues are education, health care and child care.

Formed in 1977, the commission is an advocate seeking to improve the legal, social, economic, educational and political status of women by working with business, government and nonprofit agencies.

Thomas, who is a resource teacher at Meadows Elementary in Huntington, said the commission is much like what she does at school.

"We empower women and help find resources to help them reach their goals," she said.

As an advocate for the underserved population of Marshall University, Cleckley provides leadership in the areas of access to education and retention and graduation.

In his nomination of Cleckley, Dr. Ervin V. Griffin Sr. said, "She has heightened awareness of the community and encouraged women to seek careers and have a clear view of where they want to go." Griffin is CEO and provost of the Community and Technical College at West Virginia State College.

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Layne's diverse background in economic development, the arts and in community organizations has made her stand out in the field as an example to women.

In her nomination of Layne, Huntington Museum of Art Director of Development Carolyn Bagby said, "She is constantly striving to make our community a better place to live, work and play. In doing so, she sets an example for other women to follow."



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