

Media advisory: close the gap CA founder Mary Hughes Named Woman of the Year by California Women Lead

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Palo Alto, CA -- Political strategist Mary V. Hughes will be named "Woman of the Year," by California Women Lead, a nonpartisan association that promotes and trains women political leaders.

"We have worked with Mary for many years to empower women to be leaders at the local and state level. We are proud to recognize her for her efforts to implement the spirit of the MOVER Awards -- Making Our Vision of Equality a Reality. We look forward to working with Mary to engage, empower and elect more women in California and increase our numbers both in elected and appointed office," said Rachel Michelin, Executive Director of California Women Lead.

California Women Lead will honor Hughes and other leaders August 21st at its 4th Annual MOVER Awards at an evening reception in Sacramento.

"We are delighted to see Mary recognized for her innovative and pioneering work recruiting women to run for office," said Betsy Cotton, Director of close the gap CA, a campaign to recruit progressive women to run for open legislative seats in California in 2014 and 2016. Hughes is founder and political strategist for close the gap CA. Nearly half of California's 120 legislative seats will open up in the next two election cycles. Today women are 26 percent of the legislators, down from 30 percent a decade ago.

She also is co-founder and President of Hughes & Company, a strategic communications and political consulting firm in Palo Alto. She founded and served as Director of The 2012 Project, a national, non-partisan campaign of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University to increase the number of women in Congress and state legislatures by taking advantage of new and open districts resulting from redistricting and reapportionment.

Hughes previously was named by Women's eNews one of 21 Leaders for the 21st Century (2012) and Woman of the Year (2007) by Emerge California.

Hughes has advised candidates for President, Congress, state and legislative office contributing to a number of groundbreaking “firsts” — first woman in US history to lead her Party in the Congress; first woman Superintendent of Schools in California; and first open lesbian judge elected in the nation.

Other California Women Lead MOVER Award honorees include:

Elected Woman of the Year: Cindy Marks, trustee, Modesto City Schools,

Appointed Woman of the Year: Mona Pasquil, appointments secretary, Office of Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

Hall of Fame: Laura N. Chick, former controller, City of Los Angeles and Charlene Zettel, regent, University of California and CEO, Donate Life California

Tickets to the event can be purchased at cawomenlead.org.

close the gap CA is a statewide campaign to increase the number of women in the CA legislature by recruiting talented, community-based, policy-focused women to run for open seats in 2014 and 2016. By partnering with progressive advocacy organizations focused on reducing poverty, improving education and increasing access to affordable healthcare, we will identify women whose skills and records of accomplishment will make them effective leaders in Sacramento. closethegapCA.org

California Women Lead™'s mission is increasing the number of women in elected and appointed office at all levels of California government — state, county and city. We are a statewide non-partisan network of citizen, business and government leaders. Our successful programs include leadership trainings and workshops, providing the tools women need as officeholders, community advocates and policymakers in California. cawomenlead.org

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