

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS RECOGNIZE “SUPERWOMEN”
DURING THEIR WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION**

**Junior Leagues of Montclair-Newark and of the Oranges and Short Hills, Emerge NJ,
Assemblywoman L. Grace Spencer, Anna B. Scott and Carol V. Alves-Ward
Honored at March 25th Event**

(Newark, NJ) – The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders held its Annual Women’s History Month Celebration on Wednesday, March 25th, at the Hall of Records. The event was sponsored by Freeholder President Britnee N. Timberlake of East Orange and Freeholders Lebbby C. Jones of Irvington, Patricia Sebold of Livingston and Cynthia D. Toro of Bloomfield. The theme of this year’s program was “Superwomen”.

This year’s honorees were the Junior League of Montclair-Newark, the Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills, Emerge NJ, Assemblywoman L. Grace Spencer of Newark, Anna B. Scott of Irvington, and Carol V. Alves-Ward of Bloomfield.



The Women’s History Month honorees and their sponsors gather for a group photo: (first row, l. to r.) Celia King, Chairwoman of Emerge NJ; Kelly Sandler, Esq., President of the Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills; and Assemblywoman L. Grace Spencer of Newark; (2nd row, l. to r.) Anna B. Scott of Irvington; Shante Palmer of Emerge NJ; Charlene Davis-Williams, President of the Junior League of Montclair-Newark; and Carol V. Alves-Ward of Bloomfield. **PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON**

Freeholder President Timberlake opened the program saying, “This is a celebration of all women from every background, occupation, status, religion and culture, because it is us who birthed the world and hold families together.” She spoke of being a “daddy’s girl”, but said it was her strong mother, “who inspired me to be who I am today, and who kept the family together as a single parent in my dad’s absence while he served overseas in the U. S. Army.” She recounted a childhood memory of her mom, the Caucasian mother of two African-American children, organizing a peaceful protest against a Ku Klux Klan march in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where the family was stationed at the time. “It took a woman to throw all fear aside and stand up for what was right, showing me how one woman could really make a difference and how important unity in the community is. From the time I witnessed my mother do this, I was hooked on community service, and hooked on undertaking the fight against injustice and inequality, because I knew that women held power and could change the world for the better.”

“As women, we must support each other, bond together, never talk about each other, and hold each other up”, said Timberlake. “We must remember all of our sisters around the world who still do not have as many rights as we do. But

here at home we must also remember that equal pay is still needed, better family laws must be structured, glass ceilings must be shattered, and women still must win the White House.”



Freeholder President Britnee Timberlake (back row, center) honored the Junior League of Montclair-Newark (JLMN), the Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills (JLOSH), and Emerge New Jersey. Pictured above are: Charlene Davis-Williams, President (front row, right) and Bryn Whittle, Esq., Community V.P. (back row, right), of JLMN; Kelly Sandler, Esq., President of JLOSH (front row, 2nd from left); and Celia King, Chairwoman (front row, far left) and Shante Palmer (front row, 3rd from left) of Emerge New Jersey.
PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

“My first presentations this evening are to two *super* organizations comprised of *superwomen* that are the epitome of civic-mindedness and service to others, especially the young and the less fortunate”, said Timberlake as she introduced the Junior League of Montclair-Newark and the Junior League of the Oranges & Short Hills. “Both organizations are dedicated to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving their communities through effective action, community projects and effective fundraising by their cadres of trained and compassionate volunteer members... members who are so effective that they often sit on the Boards of other non-profit organizations and become leaders in their communities.” She went on to remark that the programs of the two organizations are varied, “but what they have in common is their obvious concern for children and families... concerns that are always in the forefront when it comes to women.... whether it be to gather toys, books, fund scholarships, feed the hungry, help foster children gather the supplies they will need in their new homes, or support children caught up in the court system because of neglect or abuse.”

The Junior League of Montclair-Newark (JLMN) was founded as the Junior League of Montclair in 1921 by Miss Sabra Bradlee. The Glen Ridge Service League joined in 1943, followed by the Junior League of Newark in 1974 to form the present JLMN. Since its founding it has been a leader in volunteer efforts in Montclair, Newark and the surrounding community, and its members are linked by the organization’s common goals of promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. As a result many members can be found putting those skills to work not only in their professional lives but also as board members for other nonprofit organizations.

JLMN reaches a wide range of children through its projects, and has a distinguished history of serving the Essex County communities of Bloomfield, The Caldwelles, Cedar Grove, Essex Fells, Glen Ridge, Irvington, Montclair, Newark and Verona. It is also proud to have founded many nonprofit organizations serving the needs of the citizens in its area, including Newark Emergency Services for Families, the Essex County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) and the COPE Center.

Members volunteer their time in a wide variety of community projects. *Done in a Day* is a multi-faceted program of projects devoted to enhancing the community through a variety of short-term, hands-on volunteer opportunities that involve approximately 1,300 children and 700 adults annually, including such projects as: *Chop n’ Chats*, preparing and serving hot meals and distributing bagged lunches at the Montclair Salvation Army; a post-holiday toy drive benefiting the Newark YMCA and Wynona’s House; *Read Across America*, when members read and distribute new books to early education students in Glen Ridge, Montclair and Newark; LINK Community Charter School in Newark where members serve as event volunteers at its annual “Taste of Newark” event that raises funds for scholarships, and speak to students about career and life experiences; and an Easter Party with food, music, activities and new books for children from St.

Clare's Social Services of Newark. JLMN is also proud of its *Fostering Hope* Community Service Project, through which its volunteers impact more than 550 children. It partners with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to work with children in New Jersey's foster care system, specifically with Adoption Day, the holiday party and the annual aging-out-of-foster-care event. It also assembles essential kits containing toiletries and other necessities given to children first entering the foster care system.

The 2014-15 JLMN Board of Directors is comprised of: Charlene Davis-Williams, President; Anne Baldwin, President-Elect; Karen Andes, Administrative VP; Lisa Iurato, Communications; Bryn Whittle, Esq., Community VP; Heather LeClair, Finance VP; Sarah Otazo, Endowment VP; Jessica Lane, Membership VP; Betsy Beyer, First Sustainer VP; Tara Ashmore, Second Sustainer VP; and Tara Sullivan, Nominating Chair.

"I want to say thank you for honoring us for the work we do in Essex County, and may we all continue to be the change that we want to see in the world", said Charlene Davis-Williams, JLMN President.

The Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills (JLOSH), founded in 1913, is a member of the Association of Junior Leagues International, the parent organization for 292 Junior Leagues worldwide with 155,000 members in four countries. It provides services to East Orange, Livingston, Maplewood, Millburn, Orange, Short Hills, South Orange, Springfield and West Orange, and has approximately 250 members.

JLOSH is an organization of women dedicated to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and the leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable, it is especially committed to its efforts to help children in need, specifically as it relates to hunger and basic needs, and it is devoted to creating lasting community impact through its members, who are trained as civic leaders. It is committed to promoting its work through fundraising efforts. Last year it awarded \$10,000 to four different Essex County organizations, and over the last 20 years it has awarded grants in excess of \$400,000 in pursuit of its mission. In just the last year, JLOSH has stocked school nurse pantries, packed weekend snack bags for hungry children, hosted almost 250 children at a kids-only volunteer event, collected over 6,000 books, 1,000 breakfast bars, hundreds of pairs of socks and underwear and provided over 300 Thanksgiving baskets for families in its service area. These efforts were made possible through the tireless efforts of the fundraising team who hosted a variety of events including a Brew & Boots Western-themed casual fall fundraiser, several shopping events, and an elegant and exciting Little Black Dress & Tie co-ed cocktail party that raised more than \$35,000.

The Community Committee identifies high-impact, long-term opportunities for members to make a difference; it investigates community needs by working closely with community partners, proposing and testing potential volunteer opportunities, and assessing membership interest in the opportunities. The organization's goals are advanced effectively through such efforts as its Children In Need Initiative, Community Impact Days, Community Grants, determined Advocacy, leadership training to build leadership skills in its members, and *The Littlest Volunteers*, an award-winning children's book created by JLOSH to encourage children to become active in helping others.

The 2014-15 Board of Directors Executive Committee is comprised of: Kelly Sandler, President; Sheila McClure, President-Elect; Rosemary Mattson, Treasurer; Kim Walls, Community VP; Liz Harter, Membership VP; Isabelle Felix, Recording Secretary; Meredith Amico, Fundraising Chair; Christina Connant, Communications Chair; Elizabeth Duncan Pederson and Meghan Gruchaz, Sustainer Chairs; Rie Oberliesen, Fund Development Chair; Alison Corbin, Asst. Community VP; Robin Peacock, Asst. Membership VP; Kristi Gerstel, Asst. Treasurer; and Laurie Guinoo, Asst. Communications Chair.

"I'd like to thank you so much for this honor, because it's a wonderful thing for our women to feel recognized", said Kelly Sandler, Esq., JLOSH President. "No one in our organization does this for a pat on the back, but it's always nice to be recognized by our peers, and of course we couldn't do anything we do without the support of our families, our children and our spouses, and our community partners."

Emerge NJ is an affiliate of the national network, Emerge America, and is the premier training program for Democratic women in the State of New Jersey by inspiring women to run for office and helping them to hone their skills to win. Its goal is clear: to increase the number of Democratic women in public office by actively recruiting, training and mentoring Democratic women to give them the critical skills, confidence, and network they need to run for office, and by leveling the playing field and de-mystifying the process of getting involved in politics in general.

Emerge America, which was founded only seven years ago and now operates in 14 states, has trained over 1,500 Democratic women nationwide, creating a powerful pipeline of elected women running in politically-important districts. Emerge NJ, founded in 2012, started its first class in January 2014 with 12 dynamic women from throughout the state, four of whom ran for office last year, two of which were successful, including the current President of the Essex County Board

of Chosen Freeholders, Britnee N. Timberlake.

Emerge NJ's current and past members include: Class of 2015—Dorcas Adekunle, Dini Ajmani, Cynthia Atkins, Brenda Brathwaite, Alixon Collazos Gill, Denalerie Faniel, Lynda Lloyd, Emily Manz, Nadia Moses, Shante Palmer, Grace Power and Jazmine Sandifer; and Class of 2014—Marlene Baldinger, Shelly Bell, Maureen Byrne, Rosa Farias, Kim Hurdman, Sadaf Jaffer, Diane Murray, Sara Pena, Carol Rizzo, Erin Sweeney, Cathy Wilson, and Timberlake. Its curriculum provides weekend sessions, once a month, in the following trainings to fully prepare participants to succeed: Public Speaking and Communication, Fundraising, Media and Messaging, Networking, Campaign Strategy, Field Operations, Labor and Endorsements, Technology and New Media, Cultural Competency and Ethical Leadership.

It is led by Executive Director, Karen Hartshorn Hilton, and its Board of Directors, which is comprised of: Chair Celia King, Vice Chair Lori Price Abrams, Secretary Donna T. Pepe, Treasurer Jean Pierce, Marie Blistan, Stephenine Dixon, Fran Ehret, Rosa Farias, Pam Frank, Maneesha Kelkar, Shawn Laurenti, Kelly Leight, Marcia Marley, Jean Pierce, Carol Rizzo, Phyllis Salowe-Kaye, Safanya Searcy, Milly Silva, Patricia Teffenhart, Myra Terry, Noemi Velazquez and Syd Whalley.

"I'm proud to say that I graduated last year with the inaugural class of Emerge NJ", said Freeholder President Timberlake, "which specializes in training women to take up leadership roles in elected office, dispelling the lie that we can't do it, to serve their communities, supplying them with the skills and technical assistance they need." She added, "It gives me great pleasure to give this award to Emerge NJ, an organization that promotes diversity and progressive women."

"We are so appreciative of being recognized at this very early stage in our legacy", said Celia King, Chair of the Emerge NJ Board of Directors. "We have just recruited our 2nd class and are still in our infancy, yet we are making some significant strides in getting women elected." She explained that the organization and its Board have put a program together that not only teaches women what it is like to run for office, "but also to be well-prepared and confident to run against their male counterparts." She went on to say, "In Essex County alone, there is only one female mayor among the 22 municipalities, and on the national scene, although we are 50% of the population, we hold only 20% of elected seats; that is abysmal, and Emerge has set out to change that."

Shante Palmer, a member of Emerge NJ's 2015 Class, shared her "story of empowerment", which saw her transform her life from being a 16-year old pregnant girl living in a household plagued by domestic violence, to enrolling at Essex County College four months after giving birth where she earned an Associate's degree, then a Bachelor's degree from Montclair State and a Master's degree from Rutgers-Newark, working seven years for the National Labor Relations Board to currently serving as a Projects Specialist for U. S. Senator Cory Booker, as well as an adjunct professor at ECC. "It is imperative that we shine a light on organizations like Emerge which aim to encourage, empower and equip women with the tools needed to emerge as leaders in the community and the workplace", said Palmer. "My struggles and obstacles never stopped me from pursuing education, and I hope to inspire young women going through similar struggles. It is very important for me to reach back to lend a helping hand to the community that contributed to my success", said Palmer, "So thank you, Emerge NJ, for helping to build my confidence to be better, hold my head up high, and say, 'I *am* a superwoman'."



Freeholder Patricia Sebold of Livingston (left) honored Assemblywoman L. Grace Spencer of Newark during the Board's Women's History Month Celebration at the Hall of Records. **PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON**

The Honorable L. Grace Spencer of Newark (Dist. 29) was elected to the New Jersey General Assembly in November 2007, and sworn-in on January 8, 2008. She is committed to representing her constituents in particular, and the residents of New Jersey in general, and her successes are a culmination of the efforts and vision of individuals who are also devoted to seeing the City of Newark and the Township of Belleville achieve greatness.

In January of 2010, Assemblywoman Spencer was selected by Speaker Sheila Oliver to serve as Deputy Speaker of the General Assembly, and she continues to serve in that role today. She is also Chairwoman of the Assembly's Environment and Solid Waste Committee, Vice Chair of the Appropriations Committee, and a member of the Women and Children Committee; she has also served as Vice Chair of the Assembly's Financial Institution Committee. Assemblywoman Spencer has sponsored and co-sponsored several pieces of legislation that have helped shape the State of New Jersey. She and her 29th District colleagues, Senator Teresa Ruiz and Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin, represent the diversity of the City of Newark and have demonstrated a willingness to take on challenging issues and to make history.

A lifelong resident of Newark, she attended Queen of Angels Grammar School and Mt. St. Dominic's Academy before graduating from Rutgers Newark College of Arts and Sciences. She then earned her Juris Doctorate from Rutgers School of Law in Newark, and is admitted to practice Law in New Jersey and before the United States Supreme Court. After graduating from law school, she clerked for the Honorable Paulette Sapp-Peterson, J.S.C., in the Superior Court of New Jersey, and then began her career as an attorney working as an Assistant Corporation Counsel for the City of Newark. She has also worked as an insurance defense attorney representing municipalities throughout New Jersey, and professional medical providers. Assemblywoman Spencer also served as the Chief Municipal Prosecutor under Newark Mayors Cory Booker and Luis Quintana, and is presently the Director of Labor Relations for the County of Essex.

She has a sister, Louvenia, and four brothers, Matthew, Clifford, Samuel and Zachary, and is the proud mother of her daughter, Willow, her first child, who was born just days after the event.

"My honoree is an accomplished attorney, Assemblywoman for the 29th Legislative District, Director of Labor Relations for the County of Essex, my good friend, and as you can see, is about to become a mother any minute!", said Freeholder Patricia Sebold as she introduced Spencer. "Grace Spencer has succeeded in everything she's done because she's intelligent, caring, hard-working and devoted to whatever the task at hand might be. So I have no doubt, no doubt whatsoever, that she is also prepared to succeed with flying colors in her next assignment... that of a Mother." Concluding her remarks, Sebold said, "Grace, on behalf of every member of the Board of Freeholders it is my honor to present you with this Commendation for all you have and will accomplish, and for being the incredible "Superwoman" you are. Congratulations!"

"The first step every day of my life is made with faith; I don't know what the steps will look like, or what the surface will be, but I step out on faith every morning, and when I chose to become a part of the political world, I did so on faith", said Spencer. She spoke of all the people she's met since becoming an assemblywoman who have "truly become my friends

and members of my family”, debunking the often-asserted “truth” that it isn’t possible to have politicians as friends and that the friends you make in politics aren’t *real* friends. She concluded by saying, “Thanks again for this honor, and I hope I can continue to make each and every one of you proud as your Assemblywoman, as your Director of Labor Relations, and as a mom.”



Freeholder Lebbly C. Jones of Irvington (left) introduces her honoree, Anna B. Scott, also of Irvington. **PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON**

Anna B. Scott of Irvington is a retired educator, and a highly-motivated resident of the Township of Irvington since 1978, who has devoted her intelligence, determination and talents to countless civic organizations. She is a graduate of Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina, where she earned her Bachelor of Social Studies degree and began her teaching career in 1969 on Yonges Island, South Carolina, before moving to Newark in 1970 where she began her 33-year tenure with the Newark Public Schools.

In January 1970, Scott became a 5th grade teacher at Garfield Elementary School before teaching at Hudson Street School from 1971-76, during which time she also earned her Certification as an Elementary School Teacher at Kean College. She then moved to Louise A. Spencer School where she taught 5th grade from 1976-86, earned her Master’s degree in School Counseling and Social Work at Kean in 1981, as well as 30 additional graduate credits above the Master’s concentration level. Next she served as a Basic Skills Teacher at Central High School from 1986-91 and earned her Principal/Supervision Certification from Kean College before also teaching Basic Skills at Roseville Avenue School from 1992-94, and then at 15th Avenue School from 1994-96. She concluded her outstanding 33-year teaching career as a Pre-K teacher at Boylan Street School, where she served from 1996 until her well-deserved retirement in January of 2003.

Rather than rest on her laurels following her retirement, Scott devoted herself full-time to her “second” career as a community activist and volunteer in Irvington, which had begun years earlier on a part-time basis while she was still teaching, and continues today. She was elected to the Irvington Board of Education in 1997 where she served for 13 years until 2009, including two years as Vice President and one year as President. She has been a member of the Irvington Board of Adjustment since 2004, and has served on the Irvington Housing Authority since 2011, currently holding the position of President. She is the Treasurer of the Irvington Democratic County Committee, has been a District Leader for the West Ward’s District 9 for 14 years, and a member of the Irvington Branch of the NAACP for more than ten years.

She is also a member of Israel Memorial A.M.E. Church in Newark, where she is a hard-working member of the Senior Usher Board. In her spare time, she loves to bowl, read, travel to different states and countries, listen to music, dance, help others, and most of all, enjoy life.

“Anna B. Scott is a quiet woman who has given much of her career to the Township of Irvington... as a member of the Board of Education, as President of the Irvington Housing Authority, and as a District Leader and Treasurer of the Irvington Democratic Party... all without pay”, said Freeholder Lebbly Jones. “So when I was asked to select someone to be honored, I didn’t have to think twice... it had to be Anna B, who I call ‘Scottie’.” She went on to say, “Without her help, her competence, so many of the good things that have been accomplished in Irvington in recent years just wouldn’t

have occurred. Anna doesn't talk a lot, rather she works a lot, and there's no other person I'd like to bring on this stage than Anna Scott, the wind beneath my wings."

"I am so very honored to be recognized by my friend, Lebbby Jones, who is a truly important and accomplished woman in the Township of Irvington." She offered thanks to "my entire Irvington family for coming out to support me", and concluded by saying, "I appreciate and thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for giving me this honor this afternoon."



District 5 Freeholder Cynthia D. Toro (left) presented the Board's commendation to her honoree, Carol V. Alves-Ward. **PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON**

Carol V. Alves-Ward was born in Glen Ridge and has lived in Bloomfield for 68 of her 70 years, where she attended Bloomfield H. S. and the Essex County Vocational School. She was employed at Clara Maass Medical Center in Belleville from 1982 until her retirement in 2010, where she worked in a variety of roles and departments, including Certified Nursing Assistant in the Cancer Unit, a Patient-Staff Liaison and Billing Clerk in the Emergency Department.

Alves-Ward has been an active member of Bloomfield's New Light Baptist Church (NLBC) since the age of nine, where she has been a participant, coordinator and leader in many of its compassionate community programs, including: the Carla Ward Memorial Walk-a-thon in memory of her late daughter, an event that raises scholarship money for current and future college students; the Youth Christmas Party, held in collaboration with local businesses, that provides food and toys to less fortunate children; the NLBC Funeral Repast, which sets-up, cleans-up and provides food following funeral processions; as well as efforts to feed the homeless at Newark's Penn Station and provide food to the local Senior Building.

She leads the NLBC Kitchen Ministry; hosts the Carla Ward Annual Memorial Picnic; participates in the Annual Winter Coat distribution in conjunction with the Bloomfield United Way; hosts the NLBC branch of the Township's Code Blue Program for homeless citizens; provides Thanksgiving baskets for those in need, often out of her own pocket; and, while employed at Clara Maass Medical Center, was instrumental in bringing various health fairs and instituting a CPR program at the Church. She has been a host in her neighborhood for Bloomfield's Annual Night Out; sponsors an annual picnic at Clark's Pond South in memory of her late daughter, where children are given food, toys, arts and crafts, and where she also participates in Bloomfield's Neighborhood Watch to prevent drug trafficking there; and is also a regular attendee at Municipal Council meetings and participant in local election campaigns. Her compassion for others was further demonstrated in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy when she prepared dinners for people who had no power, and sat in long lines at gas stations to fill gas containers she then distributed to those who needed it most.

She is the proud mother of four children, Sharon McIver, Ronald Ward, Kurtis Ward and the late Carla Ward, and the loving grandmother of seven.

"It is my pleasure to introduce you to my honoree, a true 'Superwoman' in every sense of the word... a woman who has somehow managed to find time in her schedule, and room in her heart, to help everyone. Her name is Carol Alves-Ward from my hometown of Bloomfield", said Freeholder Toro. "Sometimes you hear about people who just seem too good to

be true, and often they are. But that is far from the case with Carol... because she's even *better* than true!", as she spoke of all she has done for her family, her church and her community. Toro concluded her remarks by saying, "Like so many other women who step in to fill a void... who sacrifice their own time to help others... who squeeze every minute out of a day... who see the suffering of others and find compassion in their hearts to do something about it..... Carol Alves-Ward is a 'Superwoman'... and our community of Bloomfield is a better place because of her."

"Anyone who knows me knows I'm not one to speak", said Alves-Ward, "but I would like to thank the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders and Freeholder Toro for acknowledging me, and I'd also like to congratulate my fellow honorees." She spoke of being surprised when told she would be honored, wondering aloud, "Honored for what? Because I just do what I do without expecting to get anything for it!" She went on to say, "I will continue to do the things I do in my neighborhood and in my church, and again, I thank you very much."

The program also included remarks by Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo, Jr., and Jacqueline Jones of East Orange; musical entertainment provided by vocalist Daphney Charles; and an exhibition of artwork depicting well-known women entertainers by the artist Gerald Timberlake. The opening and closing prayers were offered by Rev. Dr. Eva Foster of Union's First Baptist Church and Rev. Ella Coriner Johnson, Associate Minister at East Orange's Calvary Baptist Church, respectively. A catered reception followed the program.

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