

Kathleen Berkey Is Zonta Club of Bonita Springs-Estero's 2020 Woman of the Year

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By: Kathleen O. Berkey, AICP



Ft. Myers, Florida - February 17, 2020 - The Zonta Club of Bonita Springs-Estero is hosting its annual Woman of the Year fundraising dinner, Tuesday, April 22, at Pelican's Nest Golf Club in Bonita Springs.

Each year the Club honors a woman who exemplifies Zona's mission which is dedicated to improving the circumstances of women at all stages of life, locally and globally.

The 2020 Woman of the Year is Kathleen Berkey, Esquire; a shareholder attorney and certified land planner with the law firm of Becker & Poliakoff, in Ft. Myers. Kathleen volunteers on several not-for-profit boards and plays a key role in the Mothers' Milk Bank of Florida, a 501(c)(3) organization aimed at improving the health and promoting the healing of vulnerable infants across Florida by collecting, processing, and distributing pasteurized donor milk when milk from the babies' own mothers is not available. She has also served as a Guardian Ad Litem, Co-Chair of Pro Bono Services for the Lee County Bar Association, Board Member and Vice Chair of Keep Lee County Beautiful, and Management Committee member and Co-Chair of the Women's Leadership Initiative of the Urban Land Institute of Southwest Florida. Ms. Berkey was a 2019 Ft. Myers Chamber of Commerce APEX Awards finalist, as well as a "40 Under 40" award recipient by both *Gulfshore Business* and the *Naples Herald*.

Ms. Berkey's legal practice focuses on the representation of clients throughout Florida in zoning, land use, and planning matters. Ms. Berkey also represents condominium, cooperative, and homeowners' association clients with the management and operational aspects of governing their communities, as well as with zoning and land use matters. Notably, she is one of only 38 Southwest Florida attorneys who is a Florida Bar Board Certified Specialist in City, County, and Local Government Law.

"We are extremely pleased of the quality of the nominations we received this

year,” stated Trish Leonard, Zonta Club of Bonita Springs- Estero, President. “They are all worthy of this award and will be formally recognized during the program.” Nominees will also be recognized at the event include Susan Goldy, founder of Kids Minds Matter; Fran Mainella, the first woman to serve as Director of the National Parks Service; Jonette Kessack, founder of Holiday 4 Heroes; and Jessica Higdon, a Community volunteer and philanthropist who serves on several boards, including the March of Dimes and Southwest Florida Wine Festival. Jewelry owner, Bill Skidmore, of Amore Jewelers, is presenting a signature custom broach to this year’s Woman of the Year.

The evening will include a cocktail hour, plated dinner, silent, live and dessert auction, as well as tickets for a chance to win \$1,000 at \$20 apiece. Stacey Deffenbaugh, NBC-2 news anchor, is the Master of Ceremony and Rick Gallo will be the evenings auctioneer.

Tickets to attend are \$100 and \$125 after April 1st. Tickets may be purchased online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/woman-of-the-year-fundraising-event-tickets-90868298527>.

Funds from this event are used to provide scholarships to local students and woman who plan to return to the workforce.

About Zonta Club of Bonita Springs-Estero

The Zonta Club of Bonita Springs-Estero is a not-for-profit organization located in Bonita Springs, Florida. It is an organization of business and professional women dedicated to improving the circumstances of women at all stages of life, locally and globally. It is part of Zonta International and participates in global initiatives, such as “Free the Girls” and “Say No to Violence against Women.”