

GFWC Jennie Award

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The GFWC Jennie Award honors one clubwoman from each GFWC Region for outstanding commitment to club, community, and family. They are chosen by their clubs to compete at state, region, and national levels for their outstanding personal commitment to club, community, and family.

The GFWC Jennie Award is named in honor of GFWC's founder, Jane Cunningham Croly, who wrote for national newspapers under the pseudonym, "Jennie June." The award is an occasion to highlight those extraordinary clubwomen who epitomize her spirit of independence, courage, and persistence in purpose through their roles as volunteers within their clubs, elsewhere in the community, and as members of a family or extended family. Although GFWC has many awards for states and clubs, the GFWC Jennie Award is the only national honor that recognizes individual members for personal excellence. In fact, it is the highest honor bestowed by GFWC.

RECOMMENDED AWARD IDEAS

As 2010-2012 marks the third award opportunity for GFWC members to receive a Jennie Award Medal of Honor, it may not be as familiar to clubs as other GFWC recognition opportunities. Since it is an award for lifetime personal excellence, club presidents should consider utilizing the knowledge of your club historian for GFWC Jennie Award nominees. Club presidents should be mindful of first impressions and make the nominee's packet of supporting materials as professional as possible because it may be judged at the different levels by influential community leaders.

JENNIE AWARD CONTEST RULES

- o Clubs may nominate one member who has demonstrated the qualities outlined under the judging criteria for this award.
- o Nominations should emphasize a member's entire lifetime of service.

- o Clubs must complete and submit the official GFWC Jennie Award Nomination Form along with a maximum 500-word written narrative. Narratives should include descriptions of the nominee's:
 - Club activities
 - Participation in community groups and organizations, both volunteer and professional
 - Commitment to her nuclear or extended family
 - Clubs must submit the following supportive materials along with nomination form and narrative:
 - Photograph of nominee (no larger than 5x7 inches)
 - Clips of two-three newspaper (or other media) stories about successful projects to which the member contributed (it is not necessary for such articles to mention the member by name.)
 - Letter of endorsement from club president
 - Letter of endorsement from a representative of another organization

The GFWC Jennie Award Nomination Form can be found in the Resources Section or downloaded from www.GFWC.org/GFWCMembers.

- o Nomination forms and supporting materials, including photographs, will not be returned.
- o Clubs must submit nomination materials to their respective state presidents postmarked by June 15, 2011, for state-level judging.
- o State presidents must submit nomination materials (one per state) to their respective GFWC Region Presidents postmarked by August 15, 2011, for region-level judging. State presidents must forward the name of their states' finalists to the national GFWC Jennie Award Chairman.
- o Each GFWC Region should submit nomination materials (two per GFWC Region) to the national GFWC Jennie Award Chairman, postmarked by December 15, 2011. The national GFWC Jennie Award Chairman will forward the nomination materials for the 16 2010-2012 GFWC Jennie Award finalists to GFWC, where the nominations will be reviewed and scored by a panel of judges.
- o One clubwoman from each of the eight GFWC Regions will be selected for national recognition as a GFWC Jennie Award winner.
- o All eight GFWC National Jennie Award honorees will be awarded:
 - Roundtrip transportation to attend the 2012 GFWC Annual International Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, in June 2012.
 - A Medal of Honor and a special certificate presented by the GFWC International President and GFWC Jennie Award Chairman at the 2012 Annual International Convention.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Nominations will be evaluated on the following criteria.

Commitment to Club

The nominee should have an outstanding record of success and achievement, not only in terms of her club's volunteer programs and projects, but also her role in a leadership position, her activity to build membership and promote the club to others, and her overall spirit of volunteerism. She should be kind, loyal, and positive in her relationships with other clubwomen, and her commitment should be continuous, rather than a one-time activity.

Commitment to Community

Community service must address real community needs and concerns. This service should go beyond club activities and be carried out through other community organizations (*e.g.* schools, hospitals, an elected/appointed position, scouts, etc.) as well as through the workplace. Activities should reflect an innovative or unique approach to volunteerism.

Commitment to Family

Recognizing that families come in many different forms, the nominee might be a single parent, a grandparent raising her grandchildren, an adult caring for an elderly relative, or an adult without children. The definition of a family member may include persons who are older or younger than the nominee. It may include nuclear as well as extended family members. The nominee should exemplify outstanding concern for the well-being, health, and welfare of one or more persons by providing aid and comfort on an on-going basis, separate and apart, from club and community work.

PUBLIC RELATIONS OPPORTUNITIES

An important reason for participating in the GFWC Jennie Award is the tremendous public relations impact it can have on the club, state, region, and national levels. Here are some public relations suggestions for each stage during the 2010-2012 administration:

Club

Once a club selects its GFWC Jennie Award winner and is ready to submit its narrative describing a nominee's qualifications in June 2011, it should send a news release or article about the person to local media outlets. Clubs might also consider having a ceremony during a club meeting and inviting a reporter to cover the event, or sending a photo and caption of the session to local newspapers.

State

State presidents should appoint a state GFWC Jennie Award Chairman to assist in publicizing and managing the award process. State presidents or chairmen who receive multiple entries for review should, whenever possible, form an outside panel of judges comprised of leading citizens to assist in selecting the single state

nominee. This stage offers an opportunity to honor all nominees, either at a state meeting in August/September 2011, or at some other meeting, such as the state convention, where each finalist is awarded a special certificate. Reporters should be invited to cover the event or a photo and caption should be sent to local papers.

Region

Upon receiving the state nominations, each region president should call on a committee of outside judges to help select the two regional finalists whose applications will be forwarded to GFWC on the national level. The region presidents should consider planning an event to honor all state nominees in her region. The 2011 GFWC Region Conferences might be an ideal occasion to honor all state nominees with introductions by state presidents, presentation of special certificates, and photo opportunities. Invite local reporters to interview the two region finalists or send news releases to nominee's local papers. Reminder—entries to GFWC Headquarters must be postmarked by December 15, 2011. GFWC will prepare certificates for the 16 region finalists and list their names in a future issue of *GFWC Clubwoman Magazine*.

National

At the time of the awards ceremony during the GFWC Annual International Convention in June 2012, which all eight national honorees are expected to attend, a news release will be issued by GFWC to major U.S. newspapers as well as to media in the states, cities, and regions of all eight honorees. Clubs and state federations with GFWC Jennie Award medal recipients as well as each GFWC Region, should also take the opportunity to inform their local press about the national honor. Club public affairs (public relations) chairmen of the national recipients should notify local officials and organizations such as the mayor, Chamber of Commerce president, and state representative, to arrange photo opportunities and recognition events.

For more information on useful tools for working with external audiences, please review the GFWC Public Affairs Advancement Guide in the GFWC Club Manual, which includes information on public relations strategies, sample club press releases, and instructions on how to create a communications plan.