

## Global Women's Peace Network Conference Day 2: Morning Reception

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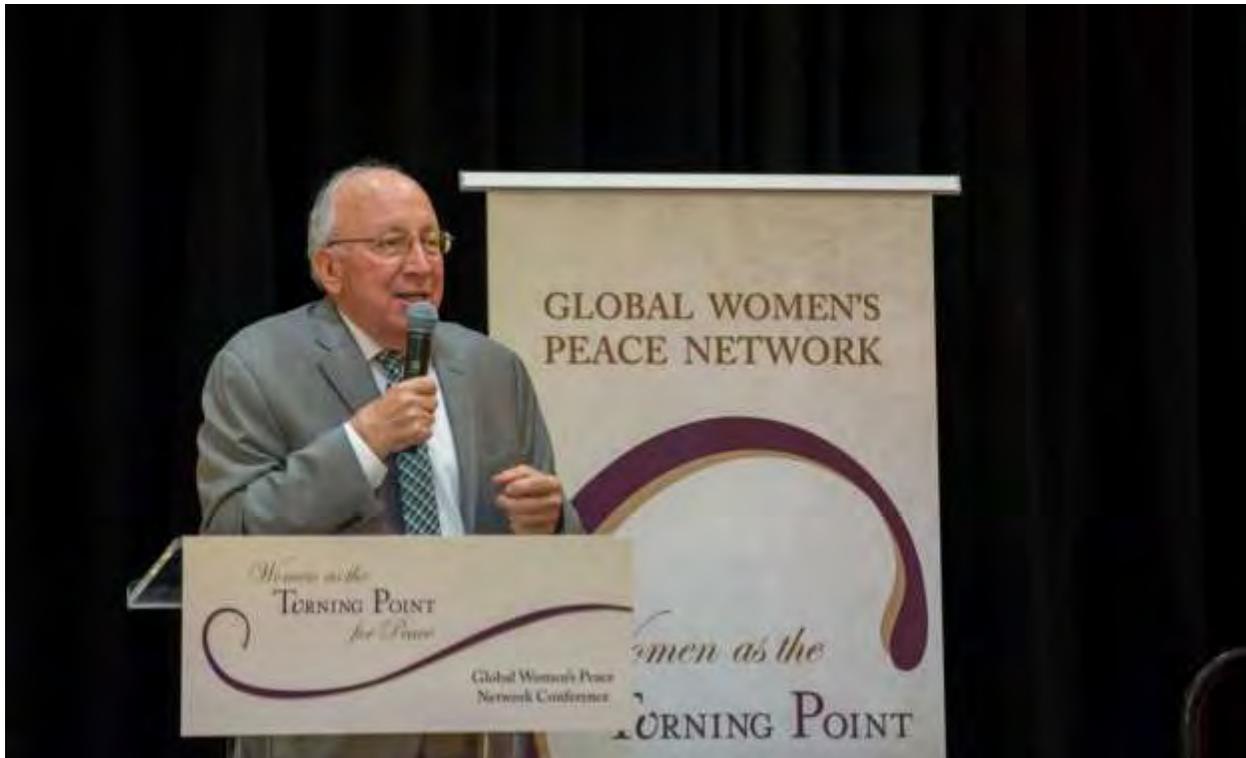


On the morning of Monday, November 12, 130 women leaders, participants, public officials, and local guests from across the country gathered at the Long Island Marriott as a prelude reception to Mother Moon's "Peace Starts with Me" rally at Nassau Coliseum. Excited and ready to hear from Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the "Mother of Peace", in just a few short hours, the women's (and several supporting gentlemen) hearts and spirits were opened by the melodic harp of Ms. Nazeeha Howard. Ms. Miambi Koko, who came from Georgia to support the weekend of events, eloquently welcomed everyone as emcee: those who had attended the Global Women's Peace Network Conference the day before as well as many more who came for this unique occasion.



Some inspiring welcoming remarks from International Vice President for Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, set a wonderful tone of encouragement for what was to come. He commended WFWP as Mother Moon's organization as well as commented on the importance of women's leadership at this time.

Angelika Selle, President of WFWP USA, spoke on the theme of peace starts with me and how women can uniquely be the turning point to building a world of true and sustainable peace. Though things may sometimes seem confusing and like a narrowing of possibilities, she encouraged everyone, if we stick to our commitment to living for others, which doesn't have a job description, God can use that to turn everything around.



Joan Myers, awarded gospel artist, brought the whole room to their feet with her rendition of the Bob Marley classic, "I'm Determined." Her performance created a vibrant energy, which was then mirrored by Mayor Don Ryan of the Village of Hempstead with his congratulatory remarks. Everyone nodded their heads in common understanding of his message from the Salvation Army. The founder of the Salvation Army was challenged to find an inexpensive way to encourage all supporters nationwide via telegram, when he decided to cut down his long words to one simple, yet profound message: "OTHERS," reminding all the necessity to live and care for others is at the heart of building peace.

The main feature of the morning's program was awarding four outstanding women leaders for their service to their communities with WFWP's National HerStory Award. As President Selle reminded everyone, every woman has a story to tell, so WFWP strives to empower and encourage women to continue their work, both seen and unseen, for peace.



Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages of NY's 22nd district, was supported by her brother, Nassau County Legislator, Carrie Solages, as she received her award. As the first woman of Haitian descent to serve in the New York State Legislature, she determined to never let the word "no" stop her from her mission to help others. She recounted an amusing story in which on her first day in office she was told that as a woman in public office, she should never do two things: get a dog and have children. The very next day

she bought a dog and a few years later started a family with her husband. She passed on the message to continue with your determination no matter what others may say.

Astrid Fidelia, CEO and Founder of Stand Up To Poverty, shared her inspiration to start her nonprofit aimed at tackling poverty and bringing sustainable medical missions abroad. She had just returned from a medical tour in Haiti where they served hundreds of people daily. Ms. Fidelia proclaimed her passion to help others, believing that 'with love, poverty will become history.' She also emphasized how simply offering kindness and a smile can make all the difference in someone's day. We were privileged to have her as a panelist the day before, where she moved the room to go beyond words and take action!



Ms. Maral Kadranian Kaprielian, who has been serving her Armenian community in many ways for many years, was unable to attend due to health issues to accept what is her first public recognition for her work. Her close friend and WFWP USA Special Liaison Officer, Aimme Kodachian, accepted the award on her behalf and shared a moving testimony of how Ms. Kaprielian personally helped Aimme during the Lebanese Civil War when she and her family were homeless and in need. The Kaprielian family took in Ms. Kodachian at age 11, and continued to be a source of support for her throughout the years, uplifting and empowering her to overcome hardship. She described Kaprielian as an unsung hero who deserved recognition for her immense love for others. Ms. Kaprielian has not stopped serving others even after moving here to the United States

As the observed date of Veterans Day 2018, a special HerStory Award was given to honor women who have served our country in many different capacities. Ms. Faye Yarbrough was awarded for her service in the United States Army as a Non-Commissioned Officer obtaining the rank of Sergeant in the Corps of Engineers. Though war isn't typically linked with peace initiatives and recognition, Yarbrough shared that fighting against oppression around the world is necessary, stating it was an honor to serve her country and promote peace. This award also encompassed for her heart to serve even beyond her time in the military. She is currently planning an extensive voluntary mission to South Africa as a Global Servant with International Ministries.

To close the morning festivities in elevated spirits, esteemed violinist Makiko Taguchi took center stage, stunning the room into silence with her beautiful renditions of 'O Mio Babbino Caro' and 'Climb Every Mountain.' Media personality attending from Canada, Arooj Aaroor, poured her heart into a reading of an original poem with the message of peace. The program concluded with three inspiring and powerful toasts to peace. Each person in the room raised their glasses to overcoming the odds and committing together to substantializing God's ideal for a peaceful harmonious world on this earth.