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GIRL SCOUTS OF GREATER MISSISSIPPI HONORS TOP LOCAL WOMEN LEADERS

Seven Area Women Named 2011 Women of Distinction

JACKSON, MS – September 8, 2011 – Seven local women will be honored for their positive impact on local communities at the 2011 Women of Distinction gala presented by Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi.

Women of Distinction is part of a national Girl Scout program that celebrates the accomplishments of women. Laureates are chosen based on their professional achievements and the significant impact each has made in her own community.

This year's honorees are Jill Beneke, of Jackson; Carol Burger, of Jackson ; Bettie Delcomyn, of Brandon; Linda Parker, of Bolton ; and Dr. Paula Stewart, of Flowood; and Mollie VanDevender, of Jackson. Additionally, GSGMS is partnering with AT&T to present a new award to a distinguished female elected official. This year's recipient is The Honorable Rosemary Aultman, Mayor of Clinton, Mississippi.

“Our honorees are women whose personal and professional accomplishments make them positive role models and who inspire girls to achieve their own goals and dreams,” said Becky Traweek, GSGMS Chief Executive Officer. “They exemplify the values inherent in the Girl Scout program, particularly a personal commitment to using their skills and talents to make the world a better place. They are the role models and mentors for tomorrow’s generation of women leaders.”

The women will be honored at a gala event on Thursday, September 29 at the Country Club of Jackson, The event will begin with a reception and silent auction at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner and the awards ceremony at 7:30 p.m.

“The Women of Distinction Gala is regarded as a premier philanthropic program,” said Scherry Gilliland, GSGMS Chief Development Officer. “This fundraising event celebrates the unique and outstanding contributions that women make toward the advancement of women everywhere.”

Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi began honoring outstanding female role models and leaders in 2004. Since that time, more than 17 women have been recognized for accomplishments that are relevant to the Girl Scout Movement, including achievements in technology, education, sciences, arts and public service. Previous honorees include artist Gail Pittman; Tyler Lott Armstrong, CEO Metro Chamber of Commerce; Carolyn, C. Shanks, Past President and CEO of Entergy Mississippi; Rita Wray, Deputy Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration; and Sister M. Dorothea Sondgeroth, O.P., President, St. Dominic Health Services, Inc.

Community members and organizations can show their support of the local Girl Scout program through Women of Distinction sponsorship. Funds raised from the gala event enable GSGMS to provide exciting, engaging and educational programs and to offer financial assistance to girls who otherwise would not be able to participate in Girl Scout activities, opportunities, events or adventures.

Sponsorships are available at various levels. Individual seating is available by advance reservation only. Contact Zandra Nowell at 601-366-5650 or znowell@gsgsms.org for additional information and to make reservations.

Girl Scouting is about building strong leaders, and Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls in kindergarten through twelfth grade in Mississippi. In partnership with 3,000 committed adult volunteers, GSGMS serves nearly 7,000 girls in 45 counties in south and central Mississippi, helping them to develop qualities that will serve them throughout their lives, like strong values, a social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth. For more information on how to join, volunteer, reconnect, or donate to Girl Scouts, call 800-898-4475 or visit www.gsgms.org.

Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA is the preeminent leadership experience for girls and is the leading authority on girls' healthy development. Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. The three-million-member organization serves girls from every corner of the United States and its territories. Girl Scouts of the USA also serves American girls and their classmates attending American or international schools overseas in 90 countries.

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