



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 5, 2014

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**Marjaree Mason Center, Inc. Announces 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Top Ten Professional Women and Top Business Awards Honorees**

*After a call for community nominations and a thorough judging process, ten professional women and one deserving business have been selected for this year's prestigious award*

**FRESNO, CA (August 5, 2014)** – Marjaree Mason Center, Inc., Fresno County's only dedicated provider of domestic violence shelter and support services, including education for victims and youth, announced today that the ten women and one business honorees have been selected for the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Top Ten Professional Women and Top Business Awards on Friday, October 17, 2014 at the Fresno Convention Center, New Exhibit Hall from 11:30a-1:00p (doors open at 11:00a).

The 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Top Ten Professional Women and Top Business Awards, a prestigious awards ceremony honoring local professionals, will bring approximately 800 attendees together with the goal of honoring these outstanding individuals in our community while also raising awareness for domestic violence. This event pays tribute to ten women who have served as role models and given back to their communities, all while making strides in their professions. One business is also honored as the Top Business of the Year for its support of women and women's issues. The Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup> featured keynote speaker, TV personality (best known for her role on *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*), *New York Times* best-selling author and philanthropist Taylor Armstrong, will be sharing her personal battle with domestic violence, and her triumph in becoming a survivor.

Each of the following honorees was nominated by a community member, as they felt them deserving and willing of such an achievement. Each of these nominations (received prior to July 11, 2014 at 5:00pm) were then presented to a committee of nominated judges who are also Fresno County community members and professionals. After the judges' thorough review of criteria for each candidate, as presented in the nomination process, candidates' total rankings were processed. As listed below, the nominees with the highest rankings have been selected for this year's prestigious MMC award.



**The Top Ten Professional Women to be honored at this year's awards luncheon (as listed in alphabetical order by last name) include:**

- **Kathy Cromwell**, MSW, LCSW, CT, Director of Center for Grief & Healing and Angel Babies at Hinds Hospice
- **Lisa M. Gamoian**, Fresno County District Attorney's Office
- **Liz Harrison**, Emmy-Winning News Anchor at ABC 30
- **Deborah J. Ikeda**, Campus President of the Clovis Community College Center
- **Karlene Kay Ryan**, Owner of Karlene Ryan Interiors
- **Cynthia Teniente-Matson**, Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer at Fresno State
- **Barbara L. Thomas**, Retired Educator/Principal and Board Member of Educational Employees Credit Union
- **Jan Thomas**, Owner of Jan Thomas Swim School
- **Mary Van Ness**, Executive Vice President at Fresno Association of Realtors
- **Lisa Weigant**, MA, Chief Executive Officer at Promesa Behavioral Health

**The Top Business of the Year to be honored at this year's awards luncheon will be:**

- **Fresno County Federal Credit Union (FCFCU)**

"Marjaree Mason Center is honored to acknowledge these professionals who serve as role models for women in our community, especially the women that we serve," said Genelle Taylor Kumpe, Marjaree Mason Center's Executive Director.

Be sure to join us at the Top Ten Professional Women and Top Business Awards luncheon on Friday, October 17, 2014 from 11:30a-1:00p (doors open at 11:00a) for this amazing awards ceremony and featured keynote speaker. Tickets are \$60.00 each or a table of 10 for \$575.00. Sponsorship commitment deadline and date that ticket price increases by \$10.00 is September 30, 2014.

To purchase tickets to the luncheon, visit [www.mmcenter.org](http://www.mmcenter.org).

To sponsor the luncheon, contact Laura Facciani, Marjaree Mason Center's Community Relations Coordinator, at [lauraf@mmcenter.org](mailto:lauraf@mmcenter.org) or 559.487.1360.

For media inquiries, please contact Rae Pardini, Marjaree Mason Center's Director of Development and Communications, at [rae@mmcenter.org](mailto:rae@mmcenter.org) or 559.487.1313 (office) or 559.351.9958 (cell).

**About Marjaree Mason Center**

For nearly 35 years, the Marjaree Mason Center has offered shelter and supportive services to victims of domestic violence in Fresno County. Currently, the Center operates the county's only



dedicated provider of domestic violence shelter and supportive services, including education for victims and youth. The Center was founded in 1979 after the murder of Marjaree Mason, a native of Easton. A graduate of Washington High School and Reedley College, Marjaree lived in Fresno for 31 years and was well known in the community. The Marjaree Mason Center supports and empowers adults and children affected by domestic violence, while striving to prevent and end the cycle of abuse through education and advocacy. To contact MMC, call business center at 559-237-4706, 24-hour confidential emergency hotline at 559-233-HELP (4357) or visit online at [mmcenter.org](http://mmcenter.org), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).

### **About Taylor Armstrong**

Taylor Armstrong starred in the hit Bravo reality show *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. She is a published author, with her memoir *Hiding from Reality: My Story of Love, Loss and Finding the Courage Within* becoming a New York Times bestseller. The mother of an eight-year old daughter, Kennedy, Taylor continues to dedicate time to charity, and has flown around the country to give speeches to empower women. For more information on Taylor Armstrong, visit [taylorarmstrong.com](http://taylorarmstrong.com).

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