

Zonta International President Receives the Prestigious Minerva Award in Rome

Dianne Curtis, President of Zonta International, was awarded the Minerva Award on November 15, 2010, in the Hall of the Capitol in Rome, Italy. Dianne Curtis, a native of Santa Clarita, California, U.S., and is the first American to receive the prestigious Minerva Award.

Zonta International is a worldwide service organization of 31,000 members in 67 countries dedicated to improving the status of women internationally through service and advocacy. A top level Non Governmental Organization (NGO), Zonta International works with various UN agencies on projects that will stop violence against women and improve the legal, political, professional, economic, health and educational status of women.

Currently Zonta International is in the process of signing Memoranda of Understandings with UNIFEM on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV and Gender Based Violence in Rwanda, Safe Cities for Women in Guatemala and El Salvador, and Security and Empowerment for Women and their Families: Ensuring a Gender Responsive Humanitarian and Early Recovery Response in Haiti, A Strategy to Prevent Burns Violence in Cambodia, Nepal and Uganda. Zonta International is also working with UNFPA to Eliminate Obstetric Fistula and a Reduction of Maternal and newborn Mortality and Morbidity in Liberia.aq

Established in 1983 by Anna Maria Mammoliti, President of Il Club delle Donne (Women's Club), the Minerva is awarded annually to remarkable women working in the fields of Entrepreneurship and Management, Scientific Research, Arts, Literary and Social Commitment. The award recognizes women who are continuously fighting against all odds to instill new knowledge, new values, and new passions in their communities. The award has also been awarded to men for their professional and positive contributions to society. Past recipients of the Minerva Award include: Simone Veil, the first female President of the European Parliament; Noeleen Heyzer, former Executive Director of UNIFEM; Sheikha Lubna Al-Qasimi, Minister of Foreign Trade for the United Emirates and the first woman to hold a cabinet position in that country; Mama Koite Doumbia, Chairperson of FEMNET; and Khalida Messaoudi, Algeria's Minister of Culture.

International President Curtis took over the leadership of Zonta International on June 30, 2010 at the 60th biennial Zonta International Convention in San Antonio, Texas. She has been a member of the Zonta Club of Santa Clarita Valley, California since 1980. President Curtis is the owner and manager of Canyon Bulk, Inc., a trucking company and, as a young woman was a successful Balerina, dancing with the Canadian Ballet. She has two sons, Dale and Jason, and is also a devoted grandmother.

President Curtis expressed her delight upon accepting the Minerva Award, which consists of silver and gold broach, on behalf of Zonta International and promised that Zonta International would continue to do all it could to prevent violence and improve the lives of women in need throughout the world.

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