

Distinguished Speakers for the 2022 Fall Leadership Conference



LINDA NEWELL

Former Colorado State Senator, now teaching, coaching DEI, and facilitating conflict resolution and advocacy

In her work and in life, Linda Newell brings a holistic approach; knowing that we are all interconnected and that everything we think and do has an impact on ourselves, each other, and the whole. It is her personal mission to embody and promote ethical and just ways of being together on this large ball we call Earth. She has a strong belief in the ever-evolving human potential so is committed to explicitly being part of that.

As a consultant/facilitator and certified Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR), Linda now specializes in conflict transformation, diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion (DEAI), and belonging. Using her chaplaincy and anti-racism/anti-oppression training, Linda focuses her decolonizing work on infusing organizational systems with human dignity from a trauma-informed, socially-just lens.

In 2017, Senator Newell was termed out of the Colorado State Senate after eight years of public service. She led alternative dispute resolution, restorative justice efforts, and significant reforms in child protection, education equity, and early childhood. She sponsored some of the nation's first legislation removing zero-tolerance school discipline policies to help break the school-to-jail pipeline harmful to children of color, kids with disabilities, and those in foster care. Sen. Newell sponsored the nation's first Conflict Resolution Month and taught her constituents and fellow legislators' models of conflict management and consensus-building using community collaboration techniques.

In 2020, Linda earned a Master's in Social Justice and Ethics at Iliff School of Theology where she received the Academic Award for the program that year. While in seminary, she also studied restorative practices and Clinical Pastoral Education in interfaith chaplaincy. Now, she is an adjunct instructor there teaching Conscious Conflict and will be teaching leadership at the Daniels School of Business at the University of Denver in the fall.

Linda is a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government and was a Henry Toll Fellow with the Council of State Governments. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Drama from UC Irvine. A lifelong learner, Linda continues to learn cultural humility, deeper systems thinking, and how to align our values and ethics with justice.

Linda grew up with AAUW in her home with a mother who served in many capacities, including chapter president. Then, Linda served as the Educational Foundation Chair where they performed Witness Womankind together for fundraising events across southern California.



DIANNE OWENS

Former AAUW State President for California

Dianne is a long-time member of the Lompoc-Vandenberg Branch, AAUW having joined in the early 70's while her husband was stationed at Vandenberg Air Force Base. She has served as President twice and most other offices. She was an elected member of the AAUW California Board, and the AAUW National Board as the AAUW Educational Foundation Chair. She recently finished her term as President of the AAUW California Board of Directors, 2020-2022. Dianne Owens is a member of the Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board (WDB) and Chair of the WDB Youth Committee. She is a former Santa Barbara County Supervisor from the 4th District and worked as a facilitator/trainer of job search workshops for the unemployed for over 17 years. Dianne trained with aha Process, Inc. in 2010 to become a community facilitator/trainer of "Bridges out of Poverty." This one and two-day workshop is based on the research of Dr. Ruby Payne and identifies principles for improving outcomes with individuals from generational poverty.

Dianne is a native of South Dakota and holds a Bachelor of Science degree from South Dakota State University in Consumer and Family Sciences. She pursued graduate work at Arizona State University and is a certified facilitator for the Institute of Cultural Affairs and a Master Certified Trainer with Curtis & Associates. She is a graduate of Leadership California and Leadership Santa Barbara County.