

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**JUDGE ROSEMARIE AQUILINA TO KEYNOTE THE
37th ANNUAL YWCA WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT LUNCHEON**

Judge Aquilina sentenced Larry Nassar to life in prison
in the USA Gymnastics Sex Abuse Scandal

Spokane, WA, May 29, 2019 – YWCA Spokane proudly announces Judge Rosemarie Aquilina as the keynote speaker for its largest fundraiser of the year, the Women of Achievement awards luncheon, to be held on October 11, 2019.

Judge Aquilina presided over the USA Gymnastics Team sex abuse scandal involving Larry Nassar, sentencing him to 175 years in prison for the sexual abuse of young women that lasted more than two decades. By allowing every woman who said they had been sexually assaulted by Nassar face him in court, despite his guilty plea, many say Judge Aquilina empowered these young women and redefined victim testimony. She gave 156 “sister survivors” the opportunity to face their abuser in court and share their very personal experiences about how his abuse affected them and their families.

In the sentencing hearing where she gave Nassar multiple life sentences, Judge Aquilina said, “I am not special, I am doing my job. If you come into my courtroom, any Wednesday and watch sentencing, I give everybody a voice. I give defendants a voice, their families when they’re here. I give the victims a voice. I try to treat everybody like family because that’s the justice system that I was raised to believe in.”

Judge Aquilina immigrated to the United States at the age of one with her family in 1959, from Munich, Germany to Detroit where she lived with her grandparents. She graduated with a BA from Michigan State University and a JD from Thomas M. Cooley Law School. She served 20 years in the Michigan Army National Guard and was the first woman to serve in Michigan’s Judge Advocate General’s (JAG) Corps. Judge Aquilina served four years as a judge on the 55th District Court before she was elected to the 30th Circuit Court of Ingham County, Michigan in 2008. Judge Aquilina is also a law school professor, a mother of five, a grandmother of two and an author of two fictional crime novels.

“There’s likely not a person in this country who hasn’t heard of the scandal involving Larry Nassar,” said YWCA Spokane CEO Regina Malveaux. “The real household name should be Judge Rosemarie Aquilina, the woman who sentenced Nassar to a lifetime in prison, and equally as importantly, gave those young women a voice and the opportunity to confront the man who stole so much from them. Judge Aquilina gave those survivors new faith and hope, empowering them to empower themselves.”

REGISTER TODAY

Tickets for the YWCA Spokane's 2019 Women of Achievement awards luncheon are now available at www.ywcaspokane.org. The event will be held at the Spokane Convention Center on Friday, October 11, 2019, from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Corporate, non-profit, and community table registrations are also available.

The event celebrates high achieving women who embody YWCA Spokane's mission of eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all by giving generously of themselves to make Spokane a better place for all.

In addition to honoring the extraordinary contributions of the winners, the luncheon serves to raise awareness about the epidemic of domestic violence in the Spokane region and to raise critical funds for the victim support services offered by YWCA Spokane.

"Attending The Women of Achievement Luncheon is the single greatest way to learn more about the mission of YWCA Spokane," says luncheon Co-Chair Leanne Scott. "Each year we honor local women who are making a difference and inspiring others to get involved in the community."

"And you don't have to be a woman to attend the Women of Achievement luncheon," says luncheon Co-Chair Laura McAloon. "We also have an initiative for the Good Guys to get involved and make a difference by helping support critical services in our community that ensure racial and social justice."

NOMINATE A WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT

YWCA Spokane will be accepting nominations for the 2019 awards celebration until June 21, 2019.

Categories include: Arts & Culture; Business & Industry; Carl Maxey Racial & Social Justice; Community Enhancement; Education; Science, Technology & Environment, Young Woman. Nominations may be found at ywcaspokane.org. Completed forms can be submitted online, emailed to woa@ywcaspokane.org, or sent by mail to YWCA Spokane, 930 N. Monroe St., Spokane, WA 99201, Attention: Women of Achievement.

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ABOUT YWCA SPOKANE

For 116 years, YWCA Spokane has been helping women and children overcome social, economic, and personal barriers in order to accomplish their goals and achieve healthier and more fulfilling lives. Today areas of focus include supporting victims of intimate partner domestic violence, promoting early childhood education, and confronting racial and social justice issues that negatively impact our clients and our community.

In 2018, we served over 16,000 women, children and families. Services include a continuum of wrap-around support: 24-hour Helpline and Safe Shelter, Counseling Center, Mental Health Services, Child Advocacy, Civil Legal Assistance, Legal Advocacy, and Economic Empowerment Advocacy. YWCA's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) provides 3- and 4-year-old children with the social and learning skills necessary for successful entry into kindergarten.

By working at the intersections of inequality, poverty, and domestic violence, YWCA Spokane is able to disrupt longstanding societal patterns of trauma.