

Women activists are honored

Awards: 3 in L.B., 2 in area among picks from lawmakers.

By Greg Mellen
Staff writer

Women from around the state were recognized Monday as legislators in the California State Assembly and Senate honored activists in their districts with "Woman of the Year" awards.

Three women in Long Beach — Dr. Elisa Nicholas, chief executive officer of The Children's Clinic; Rev. Mary Walton, an activist in the struggle against domestic violence; and Alexandra Torres-Galancid, executive director of Women In Non-Traditional Employment Roles, were among the selections.

The Long Beach women were nominated by Sen. Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach) and

Assemblywomen Laura Richardson (D-Long Beach) and Betty Karnette (D-Long Beach), respectively.

Also honored by Assemblyman Tony Mendoza (D-Norwalk) was Antonieta Paez of Norwalk and by Sen. Jenny Oropeza (D-Carson) activist Teresa Bird of Torrance.

As CEO of The Children's Clinic and supporter of the Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma, Nicholas has been at the forefront of offering medical care to Long Beach's underserved and impoverished children and families.

The Children's Clinic provides about 30,000 pediatric visits and 17,500 adult visits annually, as well as offering immunizations, medications and eye and vision care.

Walton, a 30-year resident of Long Beach, has been a pioneer in the struggle against domestic violence. In addition to this

award, she will receive national recognition March 19 in Long Beach by the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community.

A senior pastor in the Dominguez United Methodist Church, Walton is a founding member of the Interval House, a domestic violence shelter in Long Beach, and Creating A Safe Environment, a family violence prevention and intervention service.

Since 2003, Torres-Galancid has led the Long Beach WINTER program, a nonprofit agency that helps inner-city women obtain academic and vocational education and job training and access to employment that pays livable wages. It also helps with social service case management, provides for tuition assistance, employment referrals and other services.

Paez, a native of Mexico, has a long history of advocating for

children, teens and seniors in Norwalk, becoming involved in everything from circulating petitions to build the city's first skate park to being treasurer for a seniors group.

Bird of Torrance first became inspired to activism as a youngster seeing John F. Kennedy and hasn't slowed since. From being a PTA president to organizing grape boycotts and marching against the Vietnam War, to working in politics for Gov. Jerry Brown and the late Sen. Ralph Dills, the mother of three epitomizes the grass-roots neighborhood activist.

The women, one from each of the state's assembly and senate districts, were honored in Sacramento in the legislature's 20th annual awards ceremony commemorating National Women's History Month.

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