



September 12, 2019

Professional Dimensions
Sacagawea Award Nomination/Selection Committee
c/o Nikiya Dodd, Chair of Sacagawea Award Nomination/Selection Committee
759 N. Milwaukee St., Suite 404
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Re: Nomination Submission for Sacagawea Awards

Dear Sacagawea Award Nomination/Selection Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Mary Dowell for the 2019 Sacagawea Award.

I've known Mary since 2003. I was a college intern at Johnson Controls, and I was eager to meet executive women at the company leading interesting initiatives. I've always sought to learn from others, since I've taken a path unpaved by members in my blue-collar family. I was instantly drawn to Mary because of her approachable style, get it done attitude, warmth, generosity and wit. I'm very thankful she took me under her wing and continues to teach, coach and mentor me. She's always offered a word of encouragement or a story at the right time to help me think of the situation differently or realize I have everything I need to achieve my goals. She has truly inspired me as a role model to keep reaching and climbing, as she has many other women and men with whom she's interacted.

In her award-winning book, *Playing Through the Fence*, she uses the metaphor of a fence to represent where struggle meets opportunity. She coaches us in the book through her story and the stories of 19 other women to lean into the crossroads of what is and what should be. She says, "Where there is obstacle, there is opportunity. Expectations can be exceeded despite incredible opposition. Glass ceilings can be broken, brick walls can be demolished, and fences can be hurdled, bulldozed or torn apart." She taps into her values-based leadership philosophies and chooses opportunity to build up individuals and communities to inspire change.

As you will see from this nomination package, Mary is a truly remarkable woman. She's impacted my life and many others. Her lasting impact can be seen and felt across multiple corporate environments, community organizations in Milwaukee and other communities she's supported. I can't think of a better candidate for this award, who embodies the spirit of Sacagawea every day, and inspires others to do so.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination.

Sincerely,

Erin L. Henry, Ph.D.
Senior Director, Strategy & Planning – Chief of Staff
Northwestern Mutual
erinhensy@northwesternmutual.com
(414) 418-2581



PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS 2020 SACAGAWEA AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Friday, September 13, 2019

The Sacagawea Awards recognize women who have attained the pinnacle of their calling, reached out to guide others along the path to personal and professional success and exemplify high standards in their careers. Recipients of the Sacagawea Awards embody the spirit of Sacagawea—the woman who led the Lewis & Clarke expedition, a woman of many dimensions, trailblazer and distinguished leader with intellect, inherent foresight, common sense and adaptability.

The recipients are women with exemplary personal strength and ability to meet challenges that are identified as key components of success in the workplace of the 21st century. Awardees must demonstrate: 1) proficiency in anticipating and adapting to a rapidly changing environment, 2) ability to lead and manage with an open-minded, curious and balanced approach and 3) lead with strategic, thought-provoking, solutions-oriented concepts to drive results.

The 2020 Sacagawea Awards will honor women who embrace opportunities to craft their skills and strive toward excellence while conquering daily challenges through career achievement and professional leadership.

Please provide the following information for the nominee below:

First Name: Mary

Last Name: Dowell

Profession: Principal Consultant & Entrepreneur

Title: Founder & CEO

Company: MJ Dowell & Associates, LLC

Company Address: 3900 W. Brown Deer Rd., Suite A Brown Deer, WI 53209

Company Phone: (414) 708-9935

Mobile Phone: (414) 708-9935

LinkedIn Profile: [linkedin.com/in/maryjdowell](https://www.linkedin.com/in/maryjdowell)

Email: marydowell30@yahoo.com

Submitted by: Erin Henry

Email: erinhenry@northwesternmutual.com

BIOGRAPHY

Professional Career Accomplishments

Mary Jo Dowell is a resident of Milwaukee, possessing unique leadership and motivational qualities clearly identifiable and traceable throughout her career. She exhibits a versatility and enthusiasm for perfection with a bias toward success in all that she encounters. Her appearance and mannerisms make a strong positive statement to bring together individuals with divergent perspectives for impact in changing environments. She fosters a sense of urgency and commitment in carrying out responsibilities associated with her career, family and community through thoughtful action and clear communication. Integrity, assertiveness, quality, competitiveness, and innovation are critical components of her management style to drive outcomes. Technical excellence and belief in the American work ethic are the foundation of her success. She is a team player and a "make-it-happen" professional.

Mary's diverse background and experience with two major global manufacturing firms provides her with a diverse background necessary to navigate and advise on complex and constantly changing organizational environments. Her professional experience started with an international manufacturing company as corporate recruiter. She experienced success rapidly thereafter with other global manufacturing firms through upward promotion and exposure to multiple facets of strategic human resources, diversity and community relations.

One of her noteworthy achievements was being appointed to the position of Director of Community Relations by the CEO of Johnson Controls. Due to her leadership, she elevated the company's community relations outreach efforts from local to global status. Given her global impact, she was promoted to Vice President of Foundation Affairs and Global Community Relations. Through her leadership, Mary enhanced the company's community image and visibility for internal and external stakeholders around the world. She executed the company's philanthropic goals, objectives, and strategies to maximize its corporate citizenship, reputation, and leadership status.

Currently, Mary is the Founder, CEO and Principal Consultant of MJ Dowell & Associates, LLC, a management consulting firm with emphasis on coaching, workshops, philanthropy and inspirational speaking to promote employee engagement and personal and professional growth. She leverages her over 20 years as a global community relations and human resources executive to advise clients across multiple industries.

Spirit of Sacagawea

Mary embodies the spirit of Sacagawea by being a trailblazer and role model through her strong values, generosity and innovative nature. Mary's professional success and impact on multiple communities hasn't come without challenges. With beginnings as one of six children in a blue-collar family, she developed the grit and positive attitude to move from an entry level secretary to senior executive in a Fortune 500 company, in the midst of navigating through racism and sexism in Corporate America. In her speaking and mentoring, she uses a fence as a metaphor to represent the junction at which struggle meets opportunity – she encourages individuals to choose opportunity as she has many times.

She's reframed the obstacles she's faced as opportunities to leverage her unique talents and leadership qualities. She coaches others to do the same in her award-winning book *Playing Through the Fence*. The book is part memoir, part self-help for emerging leaders or anyone seeking inspiration while facing obstacles in their career journey. Nineteen women share powerful reflections of fortitude and accomplishments in their lives and careers, sometimes against what seemed like impossible odds, as they challenged barriers on their paths to success.

Mary uses the book as a platform to inspire and encourage audiences as diverse as the women featured in the book, representing multiple racial, sexual orientation and disability backgrounds. She's particularly proud of the impact she had as a participant in the authors' pavilion and speaking on a youth empowerment panel at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's annual legislative conference, which drew nearly 10,000 attendees. She's also inspired others by sharing her story of resilience in O, The Oprah Magazine, Fortune and Entrepreneur Magazines.

Mary is truly a trailblazer in the community relations field. As a visionary, Mary developed the first ever community relations department at Johnson Controls. She was successful in establishing relationships with local and national community leaders in targeted metropolitan areas where Johnson Controls does business. She led programs that promoted Johnson Controls' image, leadership and visibility, as well as increased awareness of Johnson Controls in target markets to continuously improve the company's reputation and visibility through relationship building, thereby enhancing goodwill toward the organization.

In Milwaukee, she rallied employees and Johnson Controls Foundation resources to spearhead key initiatives, including the UNCF Walk Run with a 20% increase in funds raised from prior year), food collection for the Hunger Task Force (coordinating the Stomp-Out Hunger event at Summerfest, collecting more than 100,000 pounds of food surpassing the goal by 20%), Junior Achievement, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Red Cross. She was instrumental in securing Johnson Controls sponsorship to bring back the Downtown Holiday Parade, which also provided employees an opportunity to collect food for local pantries. During her tenure, she developed and expanded multiple programs to support and develop communities globally where Johnson Controls does business.

Mary is very proud of her work to advance and encourage a dialogue on challenging community development and diversity issues. She is particularly proud of her work as a founding member of the Race Relations Subcommittee of Professional Dimensions' Community Affairs Committee, which creates productive, meaningful experiences for a diverse group of women to reflect, connect, and act together to address racism and improve race relations. Along with Patricia Gorence and Gwen Jackson, Mary worked and continues to help PD explore the issue of race relations and how PD as an organization can take the lead in making a sustainable difference in our community. Through Mary's thought leadership, they developed an integrated approach to addressing different levels of awareness education (reflection), engagement (connection), and commitment to action.

Civic & Community Leadership

Mary has continuously shared her talents through civic and community leadership for the past 20+ years, across organizations that support education, arts, diversity and community development.

Professional Affiliations

- Association of Corporate Contribution Professionals
- The Donor's Forum of Milwaukee
- INROADS
- Employer Council for FUEL Milwaukee
- Rotary Club of Milwaukee

Past and Current Board Member

- Professional Dimensions (Past President) and founding member of the Race Relations Community Affairs Subcommittee
- Milwaukee Women Inc.
- TEMPO Milwaukee

- After Breast Cancer Diagnosis (ABCD)
- Goodwill Industries of Southeastern WI
- Kings Academy Church School
- The Marcus Center for the Performing Arts
- VISIT Milwaukee
- Concordia University Foundation
- TEMPO Milwaukee
- Rotary Club of Milwaukee
- Boys & Girls Clubs' Sista Pride Committee
- United Way Collaborative Fund
- United Way Women's Leadership Council
- Founding member of UPAF's Notable Women
- The Milwaukee Urban League
- The Women's Fund
- Marcus Center for the Performing Arts
- Past Chair of the Board of Directors of Ko-Thi Dance Company
- Past Chair of the Board of Directors of Milwaukee Urban League

Awards Received

- Black Women in Sisterhood for Action (BISA) National Award
- Milwaukee Times "Black Excellence Award"
- The Business Journal "Women of Influence" Award
- United Community Center's "Friends of the Hispanic Community" Award
- Wisconsin African American Women's Center's Community Award
- NAACP "Drum Major For Justice Award"
- NAACP "Staying Connected With Our Community" Award
- Milwaukee Community Journal "Our Women, Our Treasure, Our Jewel" Award
- "Business: Inspirational/Motivational" category of the 2017 Bookvana Awards
- 2017 finalist in the Career Category, Next Generation Indie Book Award!
- 2017 finalist in Career, Midwest Book Awards

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & PRESS

Our Issues Milwaukee

Playing Through the Fence Interview

https://youtu.be/bP24rPCcJ_g

WUWM

Playing Through the Fence Interview

<https://www.wuwm.com/post/milwaukee-executive-mary-dowell-encourages-all-find-leader-within#stream/0>

WTMJ

Women's History Month at Milwaukee Public Library

<https://youtu.be/k6K8PNpGvsl>

Today's TMJ4

Positively Milwaukee: Retiree Pens Book About Taking on New Challenges

<https://www.tmj4.com/news/positively-milwaukee/retiree-pens-book-about-taking-on-new-challenges>

Black Nouveau

Women's History Month and Playing Through the Fence

<https://youtu.be/DzB9oEH7YcY>

Milwaukee Magazine

Is the Tide Turning for Women in Business in Milwaukee?

<https://www.milwaukeeemag.com/women-business-look-how-far-we-havent-come/>

Writers@Work

Overcoming Obstacles

<https://writenowcoach.com/writerswork-overcoming-obstacles/>

BizTimes

90 Ideas in 90 Minutes

<https://youtu.be/8xty6F4nz0Q>

<https://biztimes.com/90-ideas-in-90-minutes-mary-dowell/>

Milwaukee Business Journal

40+ articles quoting or featuring Mary

<https://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/search/results?q=mary+dowell>

Milwaukee Business News

20+ articles quoting or featuring Mary

<https://biztimes.com/?s=mary+dowell>

Playing Though the Fence Overview

Playing Through the Fence, by first-time author Mary J. Dowell, is part memoir, part self-help for emerging leaders or anyone seeking inspiration in her career journey. The impetus for this book (and the meaning of its title) comes from a childhood memory shared in the preface, when a young white girl moved in next door in the author's all-black neighborhood. The girls became friends but were only allowed (due to the times) to play on separate sides of the tattered wire fence that separated them. They found holes to successfully (and happily) play through for as long as the family lived there, and the author carries this metaphor to the challenges and opportunities she later faced in her career. Within a framework of concepts such as mentoring, networking and family support, nineteen women (including herself) share powerful reflections of perseverance as they challenged barriers in their paths to personal enrichment and career success.

Mary Dowell, after over 20 years in Fortune 100 and 500 organizations as a community relations and human resources executive, is an active member of Milwaukee's business and philanthropic communities. She serves on the board of many organizations, including those focused on the advancement of women leaders, and has received numerous awards for her work. Mary participated in the author's pavilion and spoke on a panel for empowering youth at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's annual legislative conference in Washington, D.C. The event drew nearly 10,000 attendees.

The potential audience for this book is wide and diverse, as the stories within it come from women of varying race, sexual orientation and disability. As such, a wide net will be cast for both specific and general audiences at both local and national levels—including speaking engagements, bookstore events, social media, newspaper, radio, morning news, and national magazines and talk shows. The official book launch took place November 2016 at Milwaukee's premier bookstore (Boswell). The book is currently available for purchase on Amazon, at Woodland Pattern Bookcenter, Barnes and Noble, Henschel HAUS Publishing, Inc., and Boswell Book Company. You can also purchase the book from her website at www.mjdowell.com.

RESUME

Mary Dowell

1150 W. Duchess Court

Bayside, WI 53217

Professional Experience

2015 / – **MJ DOWELL & ASSOCIATES, LLC**

1996 / 2015 **Johnson Controls**

Publicly traded (NYSE:JCI) global manufacturer operating four business segments: Building Efficiency, Automotive Experience, Global WorkPlace Solutions, and Power Solutions. Company employs 170,000 in 70 countries, and posted revenues of \$42 billion.

2014 / 2015 **Vice President of Foundation Affairs and Global Community Relations**

Promoted to Vice President based on successfully moving the company's community outreach to global status, through alignment and leveraging of company financial resources and employee engagement. The department serves as a best practice resource resulting from the implementation of tools and processes for global employee engagement and external community involvement.

2003 / 2013 **Director of Global Community Relations**

Appointed by CEO to formally establish the company's first-ever community relations department. Developed an infrastructure to promote a positive corporate image and position the organization as an employer of choice. Work closely with the executive leadership team, and direct more than 20 cross-functional/cross business project teams. Manage \$10 million combined operating budget including a multi-million-dollar Foundation fund and company sponsorship leveraging. Review, prioritize, and make decisions for support for over 500 Foundation and company sponsorship funding requests annually. Audit and align management team's board membership participation. Collaborate with corporate communications team to leverage internal, external, marketing, and communication opportunities company wide. Serve as official company liaison and spokesperson for community outreach efforts.

- Strategic Business Planning and Tactical Execution: Direct the community relations component within the overall corporate strategy of strengthening economic development in target cities. Develop plans/processes to identify strategic, high-profile opportunities that establish and expand relationships within target communities. Recommend and/or facilitate relationships between JCI executives and community leaders, including elected officials. Initiated a strategy to move the Johnson Controls community outreach from a local to a global presence. Created and implemented tools that allow employee participation in community volunteer work throughout the world where Johnson Controls has a presence.
- Market Research and Analysis: Initiated a Community Relations Market Entry Rollout Plan with a corporate image assessment component. Achieved baseline metrics through interviews/surveys of community leaders, community members (random sampling), and internal employees. Implemented process improvement strategies and best practices based on data collected. Periodically re-assess target audiences to achieve improvements in all core metrics. Created company's first-ever global philanthropic "Impact on Our World Communities" report.
- Cross Functional Program/Project Management: Align and drive programs that promote Johnson Controls' visibility, leadership, and positive image; function as a liaison between community stakeholders and business unit representatives. Direct corporate involvement in strategic events including the Discovery World *TechnoJungle* exhibit, the Wisconsin *Igniting Creative Energy (ICE) Challenge*, the annual *City of Milwaukee Holiday Parade*, the *NAACP Convention*, and *Executive Involvement & Steering and Community Involvement Program* initiatives. Increased employee involvement by more than 250%.
- Foundation Management: Leverage \$10M Foundation and sponsorship budget through employee volunteerism and executive management participation. Significantly increased visibility of the company's leadership team's volunteerism and participation in the community.

1996 / 2003

Director of Human Resources and Diversity | Corporate Office

Recruited to the Manager of Staffing and Diversity position; promoted twice with increased responsibilities before director appointment in 2003. Applied experienced judgment of HR principles/practices to ensure value-added counsel/advice, promoting employee satisfaction, and timely delivery of quality services. Directed corporate employee relations, and provided leadership for Staffing and EEO department. Managed diversity initiatives, performance management, and training and development functions. Directed a team of three staff members.

- Employee Relations: Provided counsel to all employees regarding dispute resolutions. Conducted routine employee surveys and facilitated action planning with division heads to proactively address issues and opportunities. Created and led the *Alternative Dispute Resolution Team*, which resolved issues in-house leading to a 60% reduction in litigation.
- Performance Management: Developed and implemented a *Progressive Discipline* program and trained managers on how to effectively investigate and resolve performance issues to avoid escalation. Implemented *Individual Development Planning* program and achieved 90% participation.
- Staffing and Recruitment: Improved staffing effectiveness, and standardized processes. Implemented and trained managers in targeted selection techniques. Enhanced corporate identity through recruiting brochure and website; implemented regulatory-compliant electronic recruitment processes. Increased employee participation in the recruitment process.
- Training & Development: Introduced innovative training programs including *Coaching for Managers, Behavioral Based Interviewing, and Diversity Awareness*. Implemented compliant e-learning processes.
- Diversity Initiatives: Facilitated the development and maintenance of an overall strategic and operational framework for the corporation's diversity initiatives. Collaborated with business-unit counterparts in developing and implementing strategies to achieve objectives. Led cross-company college recruitment effort to enhance utilization of women and people of color; achieved all utilization objectives. Served as member of the company's diversity council chaired by the CEO.

1992 / 1996

MASTER LOCK COMPANY | Milwaukee, WI

1992 to 1996

Privately held, \$2 billion global manufacturer with 1,300 employees.

- Manager of Employee Relations and Staffing Directed recruitment processes, unemployment compensation, performance appraisal process, and the investigation/resolution of discrimination and harassment cases. Interpreted HR policies/practices and provided counsel to all, ensuring fair/consistent treatment. Maintained regulatory and AA compliance.

Education & Licensure

B.A. Management and Communication

- Concordia University Wisconsin | Graduated with High Honors

Licensed Practical Nurse (Current in WI)

- Vanderbilt University Hospital | Graduated in the Top 10% of Class

Affiliations & Awards

Board Memberships (Current and Recent)

After Breast Cancer Diagnosis (ABCD), Goodwill Industries of SE Wisconsin, Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, Milwaukee Women Inc, TEMPO Milwaukee, Professional Dimensions (past president), VISIT Milwaukee, The Women's Fund, and Chair of the Board of Directors of KO-THI Dance Company, and the Milwaukee Urban League.

Memberships

Association of Corporate Contribution Professionals, The Donor's Forum of Milwaukee, YMCA (Black Achievers and Sista Pride programs), Advisory Council Member of FUEL Milwaukee, United Performing Arts Fund: Founding Member of Notable Women Council, United Way Women's Leadership Council, and member of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee.

Awards

Black Women in Sisterhood for Action (BISA) National Award, Milwaukee Times "Black Excellence" Award, NAACP's "Drum Major for Justice" Award, "Staying Connected with Our Community" Award, the Community Journal "Our Women, Our Treasure, Our Jewel" Award and the "Dynamic Duo" Award, Phi Beta Sigma "Community" Award, the United Community Center's "Friend of the Hispanic Community" Award, TEMPO Milwaukee "Mentor" Award, The Business Journal "Women of Influence" Award , and United Performing Arts Fund's "Notable Women" Award.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM ROSE SPANG, RETIRED FINANCIAL REPRESENTATIVE AT NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL

HENRY, ERIN

To: Erin Henry
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Sacagawea support letter

From: Erin Henry <erinhenry@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2019 3:44 PM
To: HENRY, ERIN <erinhenry@northwesternmutual.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Sacagawea support letter

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Rose Spang** <rosespang41@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Sep 10, 2019 at 3:42 PM
Subject: Re: Sacagawea support letter
To: marydowell30@yahoo.com <marydowell30@yahoo.com>
CC: Erin Henry <erinhenry@gmail.com>

Hi Erin,

It is a delight to know that Mary Dowell is being nominated for the Professional Dimensions Sacagawea Award for 2019.

I have known Mary for many years and she is always "Uplifting, kind, and personable, smart, trustworthy and just FUN to be with.

After I read Mary's book "Playing Through The Fence", I contacted our Alumnae Director at Alverno College (my alma mater), and suggested Mary as one of our speakers for our Alumnae weekend. Mary presented a wonderful program on Women's Leadership using her book as the backdrop. Then she led a panel discussion with Alverno Alumnae business women leaders. It was an excellent panel discussion and especially important and valuable to the younger alumnae in the audience who benefited from the connection with their more experienced alumnae sisters. Mary was so well received by the group and as a result made another connection with one of the audience participants for another speaking engagement.

Another business women's group to which I belong, Women's Court & Civic Conference, was the next of Mary's engagement's. This time Mary also spoke on Women's Leadership. However, she gave it a bit of a bump up and entitled it: "Women's Leadership in the World of Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect." This time the panel was composed of four of the women Mary wrote about in her book and they each addressed their journey and the challenges they faced as they climbed the ladder to success and influence. In addition, one of our community's leading companies, provided a segment on "Workplace Diversity" and wove it with Mary's presentation for a Grand Finale. Another intellectual, stimulating and well

received presentation.

On each of these occasions, Mary WOWed ! her audience, and the comments and questions flowed during the talk back time.

Past Sacagawea recipients were women who WOWed their community and made meaningful contributions and impressions.

Mary Dowell has done likewise ! I so highly recommend that Mary be the "Sacji" recipient.

Sincerely,

Rose Purpero Spang, CLU (retired FR, Northwestern Mutual)

414 - 425 - 4222

**LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM LISA WEISMAN, DIRECTOR OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT AT
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY**



September 12, 2019

Nikiya Dodd
Professional Dimensions
Chair, Sacagawea Nomination/Selection Committee
759 North Milwaukee Street, Suite 404
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Ms. Dodd,

It is my utmost pleasure to submit a letter of support as you and your committee consider the nomination of Mary J. Dowell for the upcoming Sacagawea Award.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Mary for more than ten years in a variety of capacities. I work in non-profit development and first met Mary when she was at Johnson Controls and I was seeking philanthropic support for the organization I was with at the time. She was (and is) the utmost professional, leading me not only through the process but also helping me to learn and navigate the nuances of a world-wide company and their efforts in corporate social responsibility. Not only did we collaborate to find common ground between our organizations, but she also reached beyond the purview to introduce me to like organizations who could also have a stake in our cause.

Fast forward to just a few years ago when Mary and I were blessed to reconnect – each of us in different roles. As an alumna of Concordia University, Mary has a unique perspective on our organization and we are fortunate to have been able to recruit her to our Foundation Board. As a Board Member, Mary has embraced our efforts to do better in the realm of diversity and provided valuable guidance and insight to our planning and program creation. She has spoken as part of our Leadership Series – imparting her wisdom and advice on topics such as Women in Leadership, Advocating for Yourself to Smash the Glass Ceiling and Preparing Yourself for a Professional Role. She has been available to students and to classes and her mentoring has been invaluable.

On a personal level, Mary has become my mentor and my friend. Her encouragement in my efforts to advance my career by tackling my MBA, her support as I worked through a health crisis and her vision and positive outlook have been transformative. I cannot think of a better or more deserving candidate for this award. Mary embodies each of the award criteria and lives her truth everyday for the betterment of our community and the betterment of women.

Most sincerely,

Lisa K. Weisman
Director of Mission Advancement
Concordia University

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM SHANNON JEFFERSON, CEO AT GIBRALTAR INDUSTRIES, INC.



September 11, 2019

Erin Henry-

I, Shannon Jefferson of Gibraltar Industries Inc, am proud to support the nomination of Mary Dowell for the Sacagawea Award.

Mary is a woman who has excelled in her career paths. She has worn some of the most important hats you can have on in a business, from vice president to founder and CEO. Mary has gone from behind the scenes to the face of her own company, leading and opening the doors to many opportunities for women like myself. Her commitment and dedication is the reason she has come so far.

Mary Dowell undoubtedly has the spirit of Sacagawea. She has overcome so many obstacles throughout her entire life. But instead of dwelling on them, Mary used them as motivation to provide countless opportunities to other women and young ladies that she has crossed paths with. For instance, I call Mary my Guardian Angel. She brought me into her circle, and helped me make numerous connections. Mary has mentored me, leading to the advancement of my career. Not only did Mary mentor me, she has been an amazing example of what leadership can look like.

Shannon L. Jefferson