

Acknowledgements

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**SHE FLIES
WITH HER
OWN
WINGS**



Women of Achievement Award Ceremony

March 19, 2021

12:15 PM- 12:50 PM

The 2020 Outstanding Honorees:

Laila Hajoo

Laura Salerno Owens

Debra Porta

Amira Streeter





Laila Hajoo: I graduated with a B.S. in Mathematics and worked in the software computer industry for 38 years as a software engineer and Quality Software Manager. Being a Muslim and half Iraqi-Arab, I knew when growing up I was different, but not in any negative way. I have traveled to many countries around the world and have been exposed to many different ways of living. Then 9/11 happened and all of a sudden I was looked upon differently, and in a suspicious, negative way. Feelings of not belonging and being misunderstood, I realized came from ignorance. This

instigated my volunteer work starting in 2002: co-founder and President of Islamic Social Services of Oregon State (ISOS) a non-profit 501c3; co-Chair of Muslim Advisory Council with Portland Police; and Chair of IRCO's Greater Middle East Center Advisory Council. These organizations gave an opportunity to bridge the gaps of understanding and provide community support to Oregonians including refugees and immigrants. There is nothing more effective than community work to know who you are. Since 2002, ISOS has helped thousands with basic living needs, networking with social service agencies, hospitals, and police departments. This is how we learn to focus on commonalities, not differences to justify the harm/fear. Diversity is not going away. My gratitude goes to God and all who have worked with me and made me a better person.



Laura Salerno is a trial lawyer and the first woman to serve as President of Markowitz Herbold, a boutique litigation firm. As an employment and commercial litigation attorney and leader in her community, Laura seeks out opportunities to promote the status of women in legal and business arenas. Laura has received several prestigious awards in her field, including Outstanding Young Alumnus Award winner by the University of Oregon School of Law. In 2017, Laura created an initiative called Leaders

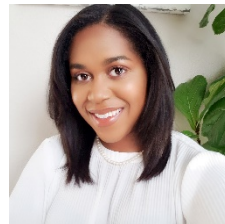
and Executives Across Professions (LEAP) to address the need for mentoring and allyship among C-Level executive women. LEAP's mission is to support like-minded ambitious women as they thrive in their careers. LEAP has more than 100 members, is thriving, even during the pandemic, and has a waiting list for membership. Laura is also outspoken about matters of gender equality and pay disparity because of her experience as a female trial lawyer. In 2019, she created the presentation "Workplace Equality: a #WeToo Movement," which focuses on how men can be allies to support women in the workplace. She debuted the presentation as the keynote speaker for OHSU's 2019 annual Women in Academic Medicine Conference and has since presented to numerous business organizations throughout the state. Laura and her husband David are proud parents to three-year old Mateo and five-year old Gianna. Their new pandemic activity is learning to snow shoe.



Debra Porta moved to Oregon from Dallas, Texas in 1997. After a career in restaurant management and customer service, she returned to college at 36, ultimately receiving a Master's Degree in Public Administration with a Specialization in Nonprofit Management, from Portland State University. While still a student at Portland Community College, Debra began volunteering with Pride

Northwest, organizers of the annual Portland Pride Waterfront Festival and Parade. She served as Board President from 2007 through 2015. Although Debra was pursuing a career in higher education during that time, the call of Pride remained strong. In late 2016, Debra became the first Executive Director for Pride Northwest. Under Debra's leadership, Pride Northwest has grown to be a respected organization and Portland Pride a nationally recognized event.

In all of its messiness, Debra believes strongly in the power of community and engagement. Whether through electoral politics, neighborhood advocacy, or community-building, she is committed to equity and a respect for all of the identities that make up our community. When not living Pride, Debra serves on the Portland Charter Commission and lives in North Portland with her wife and four-legged children, supporting and advising various grassroots community groups.



Amira Streeter is a member of Governor Brown's Natural Resources team where she serves as the Natural Resources Policy Advisor. Her policy portfolio includes issues regarding agriculture, air and land quality, land use, fish and wildlife, geology, sustainability, and environmental justice. In her work, she seeks to advance innovation and community engagement to find solutions to some of the

state's toughest natural resources problems. She has extensive experience in policy, collaborative problem solving, and community organizing and empowerment. Before working for Governor Brown, Amira has built her career in the private and non-profit sectors, having served as a policy director for the late Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish, for the Urban League of Portland, and as a policy analyst and legislative liaison in the House of Representatives. She has a law degree from Lewis & Clark, Northwestern School of Law, where she also earned a Certificate in Environmental and Natural Resources Law, and a bachelor's degree in environmental science and dance from Skidmore College. A passionate environmentalist, Amira has held many leadership positions over the years with various environmental organizations, including the Environmental Professionals of Color, the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club, and Oregon Environmental Council. Her passion is environmental justice, brownfields, and outdoor life.