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September 30, 2011

### **Area Women of Distinction honored at awards luncheon**

PENSACOLA, FL – On Thursday, September 29, 2011 Girl Scouts of the Florida Panhandle

honored distinguished women from the Pensacola and surrounding areas. This year’s honorees are women who have made a difference through service and leadership in their respective communities.

“All of the women who were honored are all creating change in their communities,” said Raslean M. Allen, CEO of GSCFP. “Each woman spoke about her personal Girl Scout experiences and how it has shaped their lives. The Girl Scout movement is turning 100 years old and with women like this leading the way for young Girl Scouts, we are creating leaders in our communities and the world.”

Dr. Judith Bense, President of the University of West Florida, is the 2011 Woman of the Year Diamond Award recipient.

Dr. Bense spoke about her Girl Scouting experiences and her struggle as a woman during her education and early in her career as an archaeologist; which is primarily a male dominated field.

“I did some research about Girl Scouts and their past and I realized that Girl Scouts has always been on the cutting edge of social issues,” said Dr. Bense. “This organization has been promoting leadership and courage from day one and that says quite a lot about this organization and where it is going in the future.”

Kitty Poulson, of Ft. Walton Beach, is the 2011 Girl Scout Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. Poulson has been very instrumental in the Girl Scout movement as a girl and adult in the greater Pensacola and Ft. Walton Beach area. She was an integral part of the council's day camp in Fort Walton Beach, serving as a unit leader, canoe instructor, and swimming instructor. Poulson is currently leading her 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of family Girl Scouts.

“As an adult, I felt that Girl Scouting fit the way I wanted to live my life, and have continued working with troops through many years and in many places,” said Poulson. “I even ran my household of 6 children using a Kaper Chart (a traditional Girl Scout tool) for the fair distribution of jobs.”

Robin Heller, co-founder, treasurer and head coach of SEASTARS Aquatics, is this year's Emerging Woman of Distinction. SEASTARS (Supporting Education and Athletic Skills through Amateur and Recreational Swimming), a 501(c)-(3) nonprofit organization, is dedicated to promoting the success and growth of children who are economically, physically and mentally challenged by providing individualized attention as a part of a structured competitive swim team. Heller took an ode from the Girl Scout law and how she brings it to life through her swim program.

“Although these kids may not be Girl Scouts, the law is relevant to each person,” said Heller.

“Ninety-nine years ago I believe Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of Girl Scouts got (the Girl Scout Law) spot on.”

Girl Scouts celebrates 100 Years of Girl Scouting on March 12, 2012. The Girl Scout Council of the Florida Panhandle invites girls from kindergarten to twelfth grade, to join the adventure and empower themselves through courage, confidence and character, to make the world a better place. Currently, the council serves 6, 024 girls and 1,980 volunteers across 19 counties of the

Florida Panhandle. To volunteer or join Girl Scouts, contact the local council office at 1-888-271-8778 or visit [www.gscfp.org](http://www.gscfp.org). Girl Scouts of the Florida Panhandle is a United Way Agency.

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