



Michelle E. Ksyer
(850) 434-1333
ekyser@gscfp.org

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Dr. Judith Bense named 2011 Woman of the Year Diamond Award Honoree

PENSACOLA, FL – The Girl Scouts of the Florida Panhandle (GSCFP) are pleased to announce Dr. Judith Bense, President of The University of West Florida, as the 2011 Woman of the Year Diamond Award Honoree. The annual Women of Distinction Gala honors women from across the Florida Panhandle who have distinguished themselves through service in leadership in their respective communities.

“I’ve always felt that it is our responsibility as citizens to work in our community, trying to make it a better place to live. My career is as a public employee,” said Dr. Bense. “I’m committed to the idea that I’m obligated to share my knowledge and experiences with the community.”

Dr. Bense received her bachelor’s degree in Anthropology from The Florida State University, a master’s degree in Anthropology, Archaeology from The Florida State University, and a Ph.D in Anthropology, Archaeology from The Washington State University.

Dr. Bense became President of UWF on June 1, 2008 and has focused on the growth and development of UWF. In addition to creating strong community ties, she has focused on making UWF a first choice school. Bense has also published five books; two concentrating on the anthropology of the Pensacola area.

“Dr. Bense is a powerful example of a woman in a leadership role who has the ability to facilitate change. Currently, women only make up 23 percent of collegiate presidencies, but with programs like Anthropology/Archaeology at UWF, that number is sure to increase in the very

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near future,” said Raslean M. Allen, CEO of GSCFP. “Dr. Bense serves as a role model for how courage, confidence and character can mold today’s young women into tomorrow’s leaders.”

Outside the university, Dr. Bense maintains strong ties with the community. She serves on the Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Florida’s Great Northwest Workforce Innovation and Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Board of Directors, the United Way Board of Directors and is active in member and leadership roles in leading higher education organizations.

“When I was a Girl Scout we were taught domestic lessons, we took trips and went camping. We learned to work together, and the value of team spirit,” said Dr. Bense. “That team spirit attitude is still with me today. As an adult, when I look back on my Girl Scout experience, I’m amazed at how the role of women in our society is changing for the better.”

The 2011 Women of Distinction Awards Luncheon is taking place September 29th at The New World Landing, 600 South Palafox St, Pensacola, FL at 11 a.m. For sponsorship or ticket information please contact Michelle E. Kyser Chief Development Officer, at 888-624-3951 or ekyser@gscfp.org.

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. Girl Scouts of the Florida Panhandle is a United Way Agency.

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Panama City Service Center
1515 St. Andrews Blvd, Panama City, FL 32405
(850) 873-3999 (888) 271-8778
Fax (850) 873-3997

Pensacola Service Center
4585 Isabella Ingram Dr, Pensacola, FL 32504
(850) 434-1333 (888) 271-8778
Fax (850) 433-1408

Tallahassee Service Center
250 Pinewood Dr, Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 386-2131 (888) 271-8778
Fax (850) 386-2093