

# Take Charge. Lead Change.

2022 is the 15th anniversary of Women Lead Change. Throughout the last 15 years, women in leadership positions have taken a leap forward, but we know there is still much more work to be done. The pandemic forced millions of women out of the workforce, and it's time to see them return. In response, Women Lead Change launches the Invest in She Legacy Campaign.



25%  
WLC ENDOWMENT



75%

- GIRLS WITH GOALS FUND
- ACCESS TO WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
- RESEARCH

The Invest in She Legacy Campaign is **celebration, action, and workforce development**. Celebrating the success of women nationwide. Taking action to return to work and continue advancement. Developing a workforce where all talents are utilized. Your donations will support the Women Lead Change legacy:

- **Girls with Goals Fund**, a grant awarded to non-profit organizations with a mission to empower girls to be the leaders of tomorrow
- **Access to development programs** for women at all levels through Elevate, Ascent, and more by underwriting the cost for attendees
- **Research** to evaluate the needs of women in the workforce now and in the future with current data and trends
- **Endowment** to invest in the future of women's leadership and create sustainability
- **Our overall mission** to develop, advance, and promote women, their organizations, and to impact the economy and future workforce.



## 2006

Former University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics CEO Donna Katen-Bahensky convenes 30 Eastern Iowa women leaders to create a women's leadership conference.

## 2007

Iowa Women's Leadership Conference (IWLC) holds its first bi-annual conference in Coralville in April to 450 attendees featuring Ilene Lang, CEO of Catalyst; Marie Wilson, President of the White House Project; author and syndicated columnist Arianna Huffington; and former Lieutenant Governor of Maryland Kathleen Kennedy Townsend.

## 2008

IWLC hosts a luncheon leadership event featuring life balance expert Mary LoVerde.



## 2009

IWLC hosts its second Eastern Iowa Conference to 600 attendees, featuring polar explorer Ann Bancroft; author Naomi Wolf; world-class athlete, speaker and writer Diana Nyad; novelist and poet Erica Jong; and founder of The Children's Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman.

## 2010

Financial expert Suze Orman headlines the 2010 IWLC Luncheon in Coralville with 1,200 attendees. Diane Ramsey is appointed as IWLC Executive Director.

## 2011

A board of directors is established. IWLC trademarks its name, logo and taglines and achieves IRS Sec. 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. IWLC hosts a sold-out conference in Eastern Iowa including an overflow crowd for Dr. Maya Angelou. Other speakers included White House Press Secretaries Dee Dee Myers and Dana Perino. IWLC hosts its first event in Des Moines to 250 women and men featuring leadership expert and author Betsy Myers. Beginning in June, IWLC becomes the convener of the statewide Iowa Women's Leadership Project and undertakes to sponsor the 2012 *She Matters Report*.



## 2012

Featured speakers at the 2012 Central Iowa Conference included CNN anchor Soledad O'Brien, advertising guru Charlotte Beers, and author and producer Helene Lerner. The Eastern Iowa Conference, another sold-out event, features author Betsy Myers and entrepreneur Barbara Corcoran.

## 2013

57 scholarships were granted for attendance to the sold out Eastern Iowa Conference that featured Gloria Steinem and Martha Stewart. Internationally-known speakers Tina Brown, Joanna Barsh, Sylvia Ann Hewlett, and Cy Wakeman appear at the Central Iowa Conference that now also features a Student Track. IWLC adds a CEO Forum to the Eastern Iowa and Central Iowa Conferences. IWLC commissions Pathways to Leadership, a longitudinal survey among Iowa women. Celebrity chef Giada De Laurentis headlines IWLC's first ever fundraising event, held in Cedar Rapids.

## 2014

IWLC launches its new identity, Iowa Women Lead Change. Speakers Hoda Kotb, Claire Shipman, Debora Spar, Connie Glaser, Audrey Lee, and Jane Hyun deliver keynote addresses at the sold-out Eastern Iowa Conference. In collaboration with Ascent Iowa, IWLC hosts Invest in She, an event in which Iowa women entrepreneurs pitch their business ideas to a panel of experienced investors. The event awards \$40,000 to several women-owned businesses. Lifestyle designer and entrepreneur Kathy Ireland headlines the sold-out Central Iowa Conference. IWLC commissions the Iowa Women in Leadership study in partnership with the Nexus Women's Organization, Iowa State University's Carrie Chapman Catt Center, and the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business.

## 2015

For the first time, IWLC hosts four conferences — in Eastern Iowa, Central Iowa, Dubuque, and Siouxland. Speakers across the conferences included Lisa Bloom, Dr. Tererai Trent, Alison Levine, Cy Wakeman, Gretchen Rubin, Susan Packard, Arianna Huffington, Erica Williams Simon, Carla Harris, Linda Rottenberg, Carly Fiorina, Susan Colantuono, and Barbara Annis. A Men's Track is added to the Eastern Iowa Conference. Tiffany O'Donnell joins IWLC as its first Chief Operating Officer.

## 2016

IWLC hosts conferences "border to border." Speakers included Sara Blakely, Dr. Tererai Trent, Carla Harris, AnneMarie Slaughter, Jeffery Tobias Halter, Winona LaDuke, and more. IWLC launches a public/private partnership called the EPIC Corporate Challenge. This initiative, endorsed by the Governor and Lt. Governor, invites companies to track key metrics in women's leadership at all levels of their organizations. IWLC hosts Invest in She women's entrepreneur pitch competitions in Des Moines and Cedar Rapids. Corridor Women Connect adds a leadership development cohort called Elevate. Metro Women Connect is launched in the Des Moines metro area and Women's Connection Quad Cities joins IWLC.



## 2017

Tiffany O'Donnell replaces Diane Ramsey as CEO. EPIC survey participation increased by 20%. At regional conferences, 30 professional and student track scholarships were awarded. IWLC was recognized as the Cedar Rapids Economic Alliance 2017 Community Spotlight Winner. Speakers included Gretchen Carlson, Stacey Hanke, Dr. Steve L. Robbins, Lauren Leader-Chivee, Laura Ling, Maureen Chiquet and Carey Lohrenz.

## 2018

IWLC hosts conferences in five regions, adding the Quad Cities to its roster. Speakers for the year included Geena Davis, Ginger Zee, Stedman Graham, Cy Wakeman, Jeannette Walls, and more. IWLC was named the steward of the Iowa Women of Achievement Bridge in downtown Des Moines and committed to bringing back the annual Women of Achievement Awards. IWLC announced Ascent, a 12-month leadership development program for mid-level, high potential women leaders.

## 2019

Iowa Women Lead Change rebrands to Women Lead Change. The first class of Ascent is launched. Five annual conferences across Iowa include speakers Jenna Bush Hager, Vernice "Flygirl" Armour, Harris Faulkner, Jessica O. Matthews, Gretchen Rubin, Monica Lewinsky, Carly Fiorina and more. The Women of Achievement Awards are hosted at the Iowa Women of Achievement Bridge, adding three new honorees. Quad Cities Women Connect is founded. The EPIC Corporate Challenge registers its 100th member company.

## 2020

After the COVID-19 pandemic began to shut down events, Siouxland was the lone in-person conference in 2020. For the first-time ever, the ICR, Quad Cities, and Central Iowa Conferences were hosted as virtual events. Notable speakers included Mel Robbins, Elizabeth Gilbert, Amelia & Emily Nagoski, Carla Harris, Michelle Poler, Katrina Adams, Cy Wakeman, and more. Sioux Empire Women Connect was launched, along with a podcast, Own It from Women Lead Change.

## 2021

Hosted the new virtual Advocates & Allies Speaker Series. The Women Connect network expanded to Cedar Valley. Over 400 individuals took the new EPIC Ally Challenge pledge. In the Quad Cities, the ATHENA Leadership Awards grew to include Women of Influence and Emerging Leaders. In monitoring the effects of the pandemic on the female workforce, WLC conducted a research survey with the University of Illinois at Chicago.