



# Leading Women Dinner

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

SC WIL Media Contact: Sara Ballard  
(803) 429-6290  
sara@scwomenlead.net

SC Department of Education Communications Department  
803-734-5080  
communications@ed.sc.gov

### **SC Women in Leadership Recognizes State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman** *Annual Leading Women Dinner Honors Women Who Have Blazed Trails in Civic Leadership*

**August 17, 2022 (Columbia, South Carolina)** – SC Women in Leadership (WIL) will honor outgoing South Carolina State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman at their annual Leading Women Dinner on September 28, 2022 at 701 Whaley Street in Columbia. The statewide multi-partisan organization works to inform, inspire, and involve qualified women in every aspect of elected and appointed leadership. The Leading Women Dinner recognizes and celebrates the South Carolina women who have stepped forward to seek elective (win or lose) and appointive office, honors women who have blazed trails in civic leadership so that others may follow, and builds a support network to encourage women to vie for civic leadership roles.

As State Superintendent, Spearman is the highest female elected official currently in office in the state. Throughout her career as a public school music teacher, assistant principal, member of the South Carolina House of Representatives, Deputy Superintendent of the South Carolina Department of Education, Executive Director of the South Carolina Association of School Administrators, and South Carolina State Superintendent of Education, she has worked across party lines and embodied the principles of cooperation and collaboration that SC WIL promotes. Spearman has demonstrated a positive and forward-thinking approach to South Carolina education in pursuit of her vision for every South Carolina graduate to be prepared for the next step after graduation.

“Molly Spearman has walked the walk - from the S.C. House of Representatives to running for and winning this seat as the only woman elected statewide in S. C. today. Her ability to navigate the choppy waters of a pandemic that put many schools and school administrators at cross-purposes with political winds makes her a model our future women leaders can emulate,” said Barbara Rackes, CEO and chair of the SC WIL board of directors.

“I am honored to receive this award and represent women all over the state and nation who take on the challenge of public office and service,” said Molly Spearman, State Superintendent of Education. “During my service, I have met leaders across this state, from women who lead large corporations to those who do the important work of serving as leaders in schools and classrooms. They have inspired me, and I hope that I have inspired them. As the grandmother of two girls, I am encouraged by the collaborative spirit we have and need to advance South Carolina. We need women and men who will lead our state into the future, and it has been my honor to serve as an inspiration for the next generation.”

Due to institutional, socio-economic, and cultural barriers that persist in South Carolina, running for elected office is daunting for even the boldest of women. Although 51% of South Carolina's population is female, only 17.6% of seats in the state legislature are held by women and are similarly underrepresented in local elected office and on public appointed boards and commissions. Furthermore, of 170 state legislators, only 10 are Black women. South Carolina voters have never sent a woman to represent them in the U.S. Senate. Additionally, since 1993, there had been no women at all representing South Carolina in the U.S. Congress until Nancy Mace (R-Charleston) was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2020. No woman of color from South Carolina has ever served in the U.S. Congress. Despite the challenges women face, this year 266 women filed to run for elected office from city and town councils to Governor with 169 women on the ballot in the general election in November.

[The Leading Women Dinner](#), previously hosted by the Southeastern Institute for Women in Politics, includes a V.I.P. reception for sponsors and special guests, open beer and wine bar, seated dinner, national keynote speaker, and awards for women in local, statewide, and appointive office that have devoted themselves to community service, demonstrated a commitment to working across party lines, and whose civic work has improved the quality of life for all South Carolinians. [Corporate sponsorships, tables](#), and [individual tickets](#) are available. Proceeds from the event support WIL's mission of recruiting and training more qualified women to run for elective and appointive office in South Carolina.

To obtain a hi-res version of Superintendent Spearman's headshot, please click [here](#).

### **About SC Women in Leadership**

*SC Women in Leadership (WIL) is a statewide multi-partisan group of women working together across differences to move South Carolina forward by informing, inspiring, and involving women in leadership. WIL's work sharing information about, making connections to, and encouraging women's engagement in local and state civic leadership is moving South Carolina forward socially, economically, educationally, and environmentally. SC WIL believes that as talented women with diverse and inclusive backgrounds step up to lead and to govern, gender and racial equality, as well as community equity can at last become a reality. SC WIL's vision is for women to be represented at every level of leadership including elected officials, appointed government boards and commissions, and as active volunteers and advocates in the community. Visit [scwomenlead.net](http://scwomenlead.net) to see how SC WIL is working to fill the pipeline with women, increase fair voting, and reduce polarization.*

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