



Communities of  
COASTAL GEORGIA FOUNDATION

A WOMAN WORTHY  
OF TRIBUTE

by Valerie A. Hepburn, PhD, President & CEO, Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation



Jeanne Manning (3rd from right) with co-chairs and guest speaker at 2015 YMCA Tribute to Women Leaders. (Photo: Lindy T. Cofer)

**T**he YMCA dedicated its recent 2015 Tribute to Women program in her honor, and in 2013 she was one of the recipients of the College of Coastal Georgia Foundation's Judge Antho-

ny A. Alaimo Award for Public Service. These accolades and awards mean little to Jeannie Manning, except in making her want to reach higher and work harder for good things to happen in her community.

Jeanne (known to her friends as Jeannie) Kaufmann Manning was born at “the old Brunswick Hospital” and grew up on St. Simons Island. After graduating from Glynn Academy, she left to attend college at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. Following work in the health and human services field and a move to the New York/New Jersey area,



Jeanne Manning (center) with fellow Communities of Coastal Georgia members, Nancy Coverdell (left), and Mimi Rogers (right).

Jeannie earned her MBA at Rutgers. She then went on to work with the U.S. Department of the Treasury (“please, never refer to me as an IRS auditor!”). Her combined educational and work experiences gave her a heart for helping those less fortunate along with a business-mindedness and the spirit of an entrepreneur.

Jeannie and her former husband, Jim (also a Glynn County native), built dynamic careers and traveled the country. In the 1990s, Jim and his business partners had the opportunity to sell their company – and the Mannings began their gradual migration back to Coastal Georgia and their strategic transformation into philanthropists. Though they are now divorced, the Mannings remain friends and Jeannie credits Jim for helping shape her thinking about philanthropy and advancing her financial acumen. He too has his fingerprints on many good projects across the Golden Isles.

In the early days, Jeannie served as president of the family foundation, then-known as The Azalea Foundation with a wink to anonymity and a nod to the board’s Southern roots. There were a few early projects in inner-city New York. Yet, Jeannie is quick to acknowledge that she learned much of the “art” of impactful philanthropy in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a community with bright, energetic and innovative philanthropists and still a beloved second home for her.

Once back on the Coast, as an active participant in the Southeastern Council on Foundations, she became heavily involved in learning about regional needs and successful funding strategies. Through her work with other foundations, Jeannie grasped the importance and value of having a community foundation in this region. She became part of a small

steering group that ultimately went on to incorporate the Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation in 2005. Jeannie continues to serve on the Executive Committee of the Community Foundation’s Board of Directors and has recently signed on as vice-chair of the newly formed Coastal Georgia Partners in Philanthropy.

Jeannie’s passions are children and families, education, conservation, and arts and culture. And, through her philanthropy, she seeks to be the catalyst for programs that fill gaps, bridge voids and address unmet needs. She and a handful of other community leaders helped create the St. Simons Land Trust as a means to purchase and preserve treasured land for the public good in her home community for generations to come.

She has an enduring commitment to the health and well-being of all citizens, *(continues)*

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particularly those without insurance and access to care. Toward that end, she played a leading role in funding and governing the Coastal Medical Access Project (CMAP), an organization that continues to support health care access for underserved populations, though now under the umbrella of the Southeast Georgia Health System.

Her commitment to parent and child literacy has launched a new pilot program through a foundation which supports the adult literacy program of Coastal Pines Technical College. The program will offer adult literacy and GED classes to individuals in the Glynn County Jail, with the goal of having them earn their high school equivalency while in jail or shortly after release.

Her support for family self-sufficiency and workforce development made her an early investor in STAR Foundation and its outstanding training programs. She has been an active supporter and volunteer with United Way of Coastal Georgia, and recently served

as co-chair of its Graduation Blueprint initiative. Jeannie helped the then-YWCA start the Tribute to Women Leaders program more than 15 years ago, and she remains a stand-bearer for the organization (now, the Golden Isles YMCA) in its work with children and families.

Because she treasures the bounty of her college education at Agnes Scott, through her gifts and service as a trustee, she ensures quality higher education for future generations of young women. Jeannie embodies the mission of her alma mater, embracing her educational and life experiences to "think deeply, live honorably and engage the intellectual and social challenges of [her] times." In considering opportunities for programming and investment, she looks for organizational leaders who are creative and charismatic while bringing laser focus and strategic intelligence to issues in need of attention. For those qualities in a successful philanthropist who has touched almost everything good that has happened in this community since the 1990s, Jeannie Kaufmann Manning need look no farther than her mirror.

*Note from the Author:* In the May 2015 issue, as I have done with every issue since September 2014, this author provided the photographs for use with that month's article on Philanthropy. The photos were obtained through representatives of the Golden Isles Youth Orchestra – and they and I represented to *Elegant Island Living* (EIL) that the photos were authorized for reprint as they been used in the organization's brochure.

After the issue was published, a lawyer representing Brunswick News Publishing (BNP) sent a Cease and Desist Notice to EIL with notification that one of the four photos belonged to their corporation. As requested by BNP via its attorney, the photo of the young cellist on p. 55 of the May 2015 edition is credited to Brunswick News Publishing. Those of us involved with the Philanthropy column extend our apologies to *Elegant Island Living* for unwittingly providing this photo that created such conflict.

*Note from EIL:* EIL gives credit of ownership to Brunswick News Publishing for the photo of the girl playing the cello published in May's edition. EIL greatly appreciates Dr. Hepburn's important contributions to our community. As we have in the past, EIL will continue to support the Communities of Coastal Georgia, the Golden Isles Youth Orchestra and all the valuable not-for-profits in the Golden Isles.



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