

Gamma Phi Beta Recognizes Gina Schaefer With Carnation Award

August 12, 2026



Centennial, Colorado — Gamma Phi Beta presented Gina Schaefer (Wittenberg) with the prestigious Carnation Award at the Sorority's 82nd Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. The award recognizes members whose outstanding achievements in fields outside the Sorority have brought them honor or great distinction.

Gina is a visionary entrepreneur and dynamic keynote speaker, best known as the founder and former CEO of a chain of Ace Hardware stores. With nearly 22 years of experience, she transformed a single hardware store in a neglected neighborhood into a thriving enterprise with 15 locations across Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia.

Gina's business not only provides essential services but also empowers the community, including the recovery community, by fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace. Her passion for business ownership as a tool to combat inequality led her to begin selling her business to her employees, creating over 130 co-owners.

Gina's journey is chronicled in her book "Recovery Hardware," which highlights the power of second chances and community revitalization.

Since 1974, Gamma Phi Beta has presented the Carnation Award to members who excel in their careers and positively represent themselves and the Sorority. The award recognizes impressive personal accomplishments and identifies role models within the organization. This year's additional Carnation Award winners are Kari Watkins (Oklahoma), Dr. Valerie Verge (McGill) and Jill Castilla (Oklahoma State).

About

Gamma Phi Beta was founded on November 11, 1874, at Syracuse University by four bold and courageous women. The Sorority's mission is to build confident women of character who celebrate sisterhood and make a difference in the world around us. Headquartered in Centennial, Colorado, the



Sorority has chartered 190 collegiate chapters across the United States and Canada and has more than 265,000 initiated members.



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