

## Honoring Juliette Gordon Low's Legacy

### *An Interview with the Founding Chair of the Juliette Gordon Low Society*



*Dianne Belk (far right), with her husband, Lawrence Calder (middle) and GSGLA CEO Lise L. Luttgens (far left)*

**We recently interviewed Dianne Belk, the Founding Chair of the Girl Scouts Juliette Gordon Low Society to find out what motivates her to advocate on behalf of Girl Scouts. This is a national society formed to honor those who like Juliette, have chosen to include Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles as beneficiaries in their wills, trusts, retirement, or insurance plans.**

#### **Why is Girl Scouts so important to you?**

My early years were on a small farm in the backcountry of the Mississippi Delta—the cotton farming area. There was little opportunity for exposure to the broader world. My parents wanted that broader exposure for me in hopes that I would have options to our very hard way of life. They learned about the Girl Scouts! My success was made possible in large part by the impact that Girl Scouts had on my value system and my character and through the exposure to all the wonderful options and interests that exist in the world.

#### **What motivates you to support Girl Scouts?**

I wouldn't be where I am today if it hadn't been for the Girl Scouts. I am so grateful. I recognize that this organization is led by some of the most committed, dedicated, hardest-working staff who direct one of the world's largest group of volunteers serving a single mission. It is awesome to see the efforts and the results of all this powerful energy.

**Why did you make a planned gift to Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles? Why a planned gift, when you may not see the benefits?**

My husband, Lawrence Calder, and I have made a planned gift to the councils where we have lived, worked, and volunteered—to Girl Scouts of the USA, to Juliette's Birthplace, and to the 1<sup>st</sup> National Headquarters, which was actually Girl Scouts' very first planned gift (Juliette gave her carriage house to the Movement in her will!).

What do you mean "I may not see the benefits?" I see benefits every day. I speak to and hear from thousands of Girl Scouts supporters, alumnae, donors, volunteers, troop leaders, Board members, and former staff members almost daily, listening to their Girl Scouts stories and talking with them about making their own planned gift. It is absolutely thrilling to be on this journey.

It is Girl Scouts which must wait to see many of the benefits. There are some planned gifts that result in immediate benefits to the donor and to the Movement. Examples include Charitable Gift Annuities, Charitable Remainder Trusts, etc. But we are starting now to receive bequests—\$100, \$1000, \$100,000, and several \$1,000,000 gifts. The gifts are not all large but with so many alumnae, it adds up quickly!

### **Why did you want to start the Juliette Gordon Low Society?**

I am the Founding Chair of the Juliette Gordon Low Society, formed to honor those who, like Juliette, chose to remember Girl Scouts (local or national or both) in their wills and estate plans.

My personal mission is to help knock down barriers that young women face in achieving equality in today's world. Girl Scouts is the world's premier girls' organization; it is an organization that is fully and exclusively focused on building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. What better organization could I find to help support my mission?

My vision is to find as many of the 59,000,000 alumnae as I can and ask them to make a gift in their wills and estate plans to the Girl Scouts Movement. If only 2% of us make a planned gift in our wills that is over 1,000,000 gifts. The average planned gift is around \$45,000 (some larger, some smaller). So, that would work out to be about \$45,000,000,000 spread to councils throughout the USA! BILLION! I know it is a staggering number, but it is so very doable. We are only talking about 2% of our alumnae—just 2 out of 100. Very doable.

Working with GSUSA and councils like Greater Los Angeles, we are starting to see some really significant results of everyone's efforts. The number of planned gifts is up more than 20%; the amount of bequests is up more than 33% Movement-wide: Wonderful help to those councils which are trying to plan a more stable source of income so they can continue to provide for our girls for another 100 years.

### **As you have traveled across the country (and across the world) speaking on behalf of Girl Scouts, what have you found to be common themes from people you meet?**

The theme that jumps out at me everywhere I go is that I am not the only one with a deep feeling of gratitude toward Girl Scouts. It is such a humbling experience for me to listen to Girl

Scout alumnae tell their story and say, "Of course, I will make a gift in my will and estate plan to the Girl Scouts. Why wouldn't I?"

**On behalf of over 40,000 Girl Scouts in the Greater Los Angeles council, we wish to thank Dianne for her unending dedication to the Movement, and for her and Lawrence Calder's planned gift to Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles.**

**If you, too, have included Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles as a beneficiary of your will, trust, retirement or insurance plan, please let us know so that we can thank and recognize you as a member of the Juliette Gordon Low Society (you can choose to remain anonymous). To learn more about making a planned gift, please contact Chris Dean, Director of Development at [cdean@girlscoutsla.org](mailto:cdean@girlscoutsla.org) or 626-677-2264.**