

Emerald Spotlight

April 2013

The GSGLA Emerald Spotlight is an award that recognizes a former Girl Scout who shows courage, confidence, and character in her current role as a community leader.



Dianne Belk with her husband, Lawrence Calder

Dianne Belk

“My early world was the cotton fields of the Mississippi Delta in the 1950s and 1960s, a time and place of what seemed like endless poverty, of hot, buggy days picking cotton and never-ending chores on the farm... It was a world without role models, without mentors, without support systems – and without any apparent way out.” – Dianne Belk

The Girl Scouts Movement became Dianne’s way out of this seemingly hopeless place. At the age of five, Dianne sold eggs from one of her family’s chickens to pay the one dollar Girl Scouts annual dues. When her father died tragically when she was 12, Girl Scouts offered stability and a respite from even harder times at home. She went on to earn the Curved Bar award, equivalent to today’s Gold Award.

Through her participation in Girl Scouts, Dianne developed values, passions, and skills that have influenced the remarkable person she is today. Earning the Girl Scouts swimming badge led to her becoming an advanced scuba diver. A troop visit to a local cropduster airstrip led to her recent cross-country trip in a single engine plane. Planning and executing a multi-council steamboat trip taught her the budgeting and team skills that served as a foundation for her career as one of the first female industrial engineers.

Dianne worked for companies including Georgia Tech, Hughes Aircraft Company, and MICOM Systems. She founded one of the world’s first wide area networking systems integrators, which she sold in 1995.

Dianne learned to give back to her community through the Girl Scouts. Her troop learned that others had even less that she did and that they could help others. She and her husband, Lawrence, now focus on their philanthropic passion of helping young girls reach their full potential. They are the founders of the Juliette Gordon Low Society, which thanks and honors friends who choose to make Girl Scouts part of their legacy and a beneficiary of their estate.