

4 women are honored as strong role models

Cathy Kightlinger

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Four area female leaders, deemed solid role models for young women, got top honors Wednesday from Girls Inc. of Greater Indianapolis.

The organization -- which aims to empower girls to be confident, prepared and proud of themselves -- annually gives out its Touchstone Awards to women who are role models in the Indianapolis area.

One of those honored Wednesday, **Fay H. Williams**, helped found Girls Inc. in 1969.

"Circumstances are different now (for women)," Williams said. "We have had the women's movement and the civil rights movement, but the issues are the same -- gender equality, removal of barriers and developing self-esteem."

Williams said she was proud to have helped found an organization that has sustained itself by helping girls become mature women for 40 years.

"It's still growing, evolving."

This year's honorees are:

Myra Borshoff Cook, founding principal of Borshoff, an Indianapolis public relations firm established in 1984. Cook is known for her ability to gracefully handle big PR conundrums.

Among her roles, she has served as public relations counsel to Indianapolis Colts owner **Jim Irsay** and his team and leads an account with J.D. Byrider, the country's largest used car and finance company. Irsay made an appearance to



Girls Inc. Touchstone Awards honorees are Juana O. Watson (left), Fay H. Williams, Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman and Myra Borshoff Cook - CATHY KIGHTLINGER / The Star

congratulate Cook personally during the event at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown.

Becky Skillman, who has been Indiana's lieutenant governor since 2005.

In a second term with Gov. **Mitch Daniels**, she has helped move the administration's initiatives through the legislature. Skillman also has served as president of the Association of Indiana Counties and spent 12 years in the state Senate.

Juana O. Watson, founder of Badges Without Borders, which educates public safety personnel in the Spanish language and culture to improve their services to the Latino community.

She also founded two Latino/Hispanic community centers, co-founded the Indiana Diversity Women's Network and was senior adviser for Latino and immigrant affairs to Daniels.

Williams, an attorney who was a founding board member of Girls Inc.

Specializing in family law, Williams has served as a Marion County Municipal Court analyst and adjunct professor for Butler University and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. She also was a founding board member of the National Woman's Education Fund and the Indianapolis Urban League.

The Indianapolis Colts served as the presenting sponsor for this year's event.