

ALISON GODFREY SELECTED FOR IAOTP'S EMPOWERED WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Alison Godfrey honored member of the International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP)

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, July 22, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Alison Godfrey A passionate female retired rocket scientist who has worn many hats. She is presently the President and Co-Founder at STEM for Flathead Valley Schools. She was recently selected as Empowered Woman of the Year & Top President and Co-Founder of the Year for 2024 by the International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP) for her outstanding leadership, dedication, and commitment she has made not only to the science industry but to her immense contribution to her community.

Inclusion with the International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP) is an honor; only a few women are chosen for this distinction based on their years of experience, professional accomplishments, academic achievements, leadership abilities, and contributions to their communities. These women empower others with innovation and compassion to reach their goals while creating change for future generations. Ms. Godfrey will be honored for this distinction at IAOTP's 2024 Annual Awards Gala.

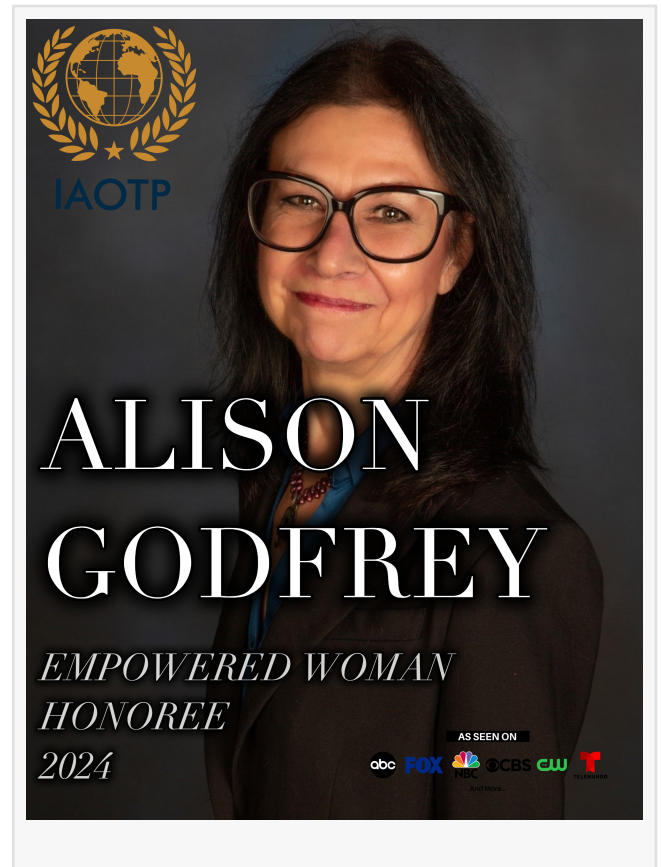
www.iaotp.com/award-gala

The President of IAOTP, Stephanie Cirami, stated, "We are honored to have Alison Godfrey as part of the IAOTP family. She provides visionary leadership as a female entrepreneur, and her extraordinary accomplishments prove she will empower women worldwide. We look forward to celebrating all her merits at the Annual Awards Gala and cannot wait to see more amazing things from this woman."

For the past decade Ms. Godfrey has taken her love and passion for science and engineering and



has shared it in helping 8th grade students apply science and engineering into real life. She has given students the tools they need in becoming innovators and has given them the curiosity in exploring multiple career opportunities that science and engineering can offer. Ms. Godfrey has distinguished herself as a dedicated advocate for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education within the Flathead Valley Schools. Since 2019, she has served as the president and co-founder of STEM for Flathead Valley Schools, where her leadership has been instrumental in fostering an environment that encourages students to explore and excel in these critical fields. Prior to this role, Ms. Godfrey founded and directed the Flathead Valley Rocket Rally Program in 2016, which has since become a hallmark event that inspires students through hands-on learning and competition.



Alison graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science in mathematics, with an emphasis in computer science, in 1982. After graduating, her rocket career began as a software engineer with Raytheon Co.'s Missile Systems Division in Bedford, Massachusetts. She was responsible for developing advanced command and control software for the Hawk Missile System. Her career with Raytheon quickly advanced with her taking on more and more responsibility for the management and development of increasingly larger and sophisticated classified programs, including the live fire field testing of those systems, advancing to a senior level as a Senior Development Engineer. In 1995 she moved with her husband who was transferred to Kirtland Air Force base in Albuquerque NM. After leaving Raytheon in 1995, she then worked for two defense contractors as the Senior Development Engineer and Systems Test lead on two USAF space programs and assisted Hughes Missile Systems Co. as an Engineering Specialist on an Exo-atmospheric Kill Vehicle, then worked for a company where she led the software team developing test requirements for multiple satellite projects. In 1998 she moved to Honeywell working with the Defense Avionics Systems Division as Lead and Principle Staff Engineer and supervisory manager for developing requirements, software, and tests for multiple aircraft programs. In 2004 she transferred to Honeywell Clearwater Space Systems to serve as Staff Engineer and Launch Vehicle Technical Lead, as a team mate with Lockheed Martin Space Systems) for 7 medium range launch vehicles (rockets) under the Missile Defense Agency's Targets and Countermeasures Program. In this role, she was responsible for the rocket system requirements, design, integration, and test. She also was responsible for pre-launch test requirements, plans, and procedures, as well as designed a new command and control test center at Redstone Arsenal to support pre-launch testing. She continued to support this program in the same role with AeroThermal Technology, Inc. as a Senior Principal Investigator on an 8th

rocket until the rocket's successful launch in 2011, and her retirement from her career in engineering.

Originally from Boston, Alison met her husband while working on an Air Force program. Her husband, Steven Alejandro is a physicist who worked as a research scientist at the Air Force Research Laboratory, developing technology for military space and air sensor systems, both retired in 2011 to their home in NW Montana.

Alison first got involved with the schools in May 2015 while holding 4 workshops at Expanding Your Horizons, an annual event for middle school girls to participate in science, math, technology, and engineering workshops. Additionally, she became familiar with two local schools through gardening initiatives at Kila and West Valley schools (she is also a Montana Master Gardener). At these schools, she contacted the science teachers to introduced the idea of bringing rockets to each school, which they enthusiastically accepted. She then floated the idea of a competition between the schools. This was enthusiastically received and would clearly incentivize the students to participate. In 2016 Ms. Godfrey established and led the first Flathead Valley Rocket Rally Program which is a program designed to showcase the results of the students' months-long efforts to learn the principles of rocketry science, which she teaches at each school, and build their own soda-bottle water rockets working in small teams. The first Flathead Valley Rocket Rally consisted of the two rural schools and 28 students. This has greatly grown, and just celebrated its ninth year, but eighth annual competition, to 12 school districts and over 750 students in the program (around 250 students at the Rocket Rally).

The program is deliberately done in the science classes as part of the curriculum as after school programs are only for the few students that are able to participate. As an integral part of the class curriculum, all students are exposed to the information. Many students who initially thought they did not care for science, engineering, and math, changed their minds after going through the program and realized how fun and challenging science could be.

The rally is a competition with five categories being judged: (1) Highest Altitude, (2) Best Rocket Design, (3) Best Homemade Parachute and Deployment, (4) Best Logo, and (5) Raw Egg Survival. The judges for each category are physics and science students from two local high schools (many of whom have been through the program as 8th graders). For the competition, STEM for Flathead Valley Schools provides all the buses and other associated costs, including free lunch for the rally's students and the launch pads, so that schools don't pay a dime. A local semiconductor company provides volunteers annually to work as our "launch pad supervisors" to help the students if needed, and pressurize each rocket for launch at the Rocket Rally. Multiple community businesses have been sponsoring the event. STEM for Flathead Valley Schools operates strictly on donations, so the sponsorships are greatly appreciated.

Due to its expanding popularity, the program has evolved into a significant county-wide event that motivates students through practical learning and competition. The teachers appreciate the fact that it not only engages the students thoroughly though the end of school (where the

students usually begin to disengage anticipating graduation and summer vacation), but they see some students excelling at math involved, and others excelling at the engineering aspects of the program. Teamwork is involved in the design, development, testing, and modifying of the rockets to compete in all 5 of the judged categories. Teams of 2 to 4 students (pending class size) compete with the rocket(s) they have designed.

Working with the schools in the rocket program, and talking with the schools' administration, it was clear the rural schools needed more expertise and associated STEM lab materials so the students could have hands-on experience. The rural Montana schools do not have budgets to support buying STEM class materials or additional education for their teachers in STEM topics. The science curriculums in the valley schools were under-resourced, so the retired couple decided to use their knowledge and passion for science and engineering to help address the problem. As a result, Alison co-founded, with her husband, the non-profit "STEM for Flathead Valley Schools" in 2019.

A key area of recent expansion has been the creation of a STEM Resource Library. Funding comes from corporate sponsors within the community as well as a few regional grants has been critical in supporting this. The Resource Library provides schools with critical resources to perform lab experiments and table-top demonstrations that engage the students directly with the subjects being studied. Schools do not have to buy and maintain the materials. The teacher simply checks them out as needed and returns them when the subject is completed and another school can then check them out. All expenses associated with buying, repairing, or replacing the materials is borne by the non-profit. There is no cost to the schools associated with the program. Lab kits cover various science areas that include electricity and magnetism, circuits, forces, sound and light waves, mechanics, thermodynamics, light and optics, spectra, robotics, and astronomy.

If any teacher is uncomfortable with the subject, they can request support teaching with the kit, and the non-profit will supply an expert to help teach the class, and the teacher. Teacher STEM education is a key part of the overall program. Montana state education standards are always met. According to Ms. Godfrey, the kids usually make mistakes in their experiments. In fact, the kits are designed to allow them to do so. Problem solving and critical thinking are vital skills needed in engineering and science and teaching the students these skills is important. There are enough kits for a class to separate the students into small teams of 2-3 students each.

The nonprofit is committed to empowering others through additionally supporting STEM education by hosting workshops at summer and spring camps within public and private organizations.

Throughout her illustrious career, Alison Godfrey has received many awards and accolades for her accomplishments. This year she will be honored for the Empowered Woman Award and will be honored at IAOTP's annual awards gala at Nashville's magnificent Opryland Hotel this December for her selection as Top President and Co-Founder of the Year 2024. Alison has also

been honored with multiple awards for her contributions to STEM education.

Aside from her successful career, Ms. Godfrey also has a passion for gardening. She attained Level 2 Master Gardener certification and helped Kila School by designing and helping to build a large school garden and outdoor learning center (just under 7,000 sq ft). In past years, she also helped West Valley School plant a native plant garden and an insectary with the U.S. Forest Service, which raises Root Weevils (*Cyphocleonus achates*) to help combat the very invasive spotted knapweed plant.

Looking back, Alison attributes her success to her perseverance, work ethic, and inspiration from her parents Carolyn Godfrey, a retired RN; Maj Robert C. Godfrey, USMC Ret., who also played a role in the path of her brother, Robert S. Godfrey who graduated from the US Naval Academy with a degree in aerospace engineering and piloted Marine Corps Cobra helicopters and later became a pilot for Delta Airlines; and her sister, Lisa G Phillips, who graduated with a BS in Meteorology and worked at NASA creating forecasts for high altitude balloon experiments, and now teaches math at middle and high school levels.

When not working, Alison enjoys spending time with her husband hiking, canoeing, biking, snowshoeing, sledding, cooking, gardening and caring and playing with their three chickens, their three beloved donkeys, and their wonderful (and crazy) cats.

For the future, she wants to develop STEM for Flathead Valley Schools into a self-sufficient organization that can continue to give the next generation the tools, encouragement, inspiration, and curiosity to explore all that science and engineering has to offer when she and her husband are no longer able to lead it.

Please visit flatheadstem.org for more information on the organization's programs.

About IAOTP

The International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP) is an international boutique networking organization that handpicks the world's finest, most prestigious top professionals from different industries. These top professionals are given an opportunity to collaborate, share their ideas, be keynote speakers, and help influence others in their fields. This organization is not a membership that anyone can join. You have to be asked by the President or be nominated by a distinguished honorary member after a brief interview.

IAOTP's experts have given thousands of top prestigious professionals worldwide the recognition and credibility they deserve and have helped build their branding empires. IAOTP prides itself on being a one-of-a-kind boutique networking organization that handpicks only the best of the best and creates a networking platform that connects and brings these top professionals to one place.

www.iaotp.com

Stephanie Cirami

IAOTP

+1 2126344427

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