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On the cover: Bush and Gore headshots by Michael O'Neill/Carbis Outline.
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Washingtonians of the Year

IT TAKES TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE TO BUILD A COMMUNITY: DREAMERS and doers. The Washingtonians of the Year for the year 2000 are people who do both. Susie Kay dreamed of getting the resources that kids east of the Anacostia River need to succeed. Her Hoop Dreams program is making that happen—awarding \$500,000 in college scholarships last year. Rocky Twyman dreamed of recruiting more minority bone-marrow donors. Through his efforts, 9,000 potential donors have been registered in the Washington area. Eliot Pfanstiehl dreamed of a state-of-the-art center for the arts in Montgomery County. In a few years, his dream will rise on Rockville Pike. Since 1971, *The Washingtonian* has honored nearly 500 individuals as Washingtonians of the Year. Each year we are inspired by the many good people in our area who make a difference. Their dreams and good deeds make this a better place for all of us.

By Leshe Milk & Ellen Ryan
Photographs by Robert Severi





These women need someone to believe in them.

FOUR YEARS AGO, ALEXANDRIA BOUTIQUE owner Joan Gaskins was asked to join a board to address a problem with Virginia's welfare-to-work transition: Many women didn't know how to dress for office jobs or have the wardrobe to do so.

But "boards don't solve problems," Gaskins says. Frustrated, she soon began asking women's groups to donate "gently worn" career clothes and accessories; then opened an upstairs room as Generations Closet.

"I thought it would be something I'd do in my spare time," she says, "but it grew."

With no formal funding, Generations Closet has outfitted more than 3,000 people, all referred by Northern Virginia and DC social-service and job-training agencies. "I take care of the clothing," she explains. "That allows them to make sure the rent's paid and the car runs."

The transformation is astonishing, every time. A parolee or recovering addict who arrived with her head down emerges from the dressing room breathless.

"I can't believe I'm wearing a \$400 suit," she'll say.

"You deserve to wear a \$400 suit," Gaskins replies with a hug.

Lisa Woll was inspired by a similar program in Chicago. In 1992, she and four friends began running Suited for Change out of her Northwest DC apartment. It now serves 100 to 150 low-income women a month, referred by 90 area agencies. In eight years, the organization has "suited" nearly 5,000 for employment.

Woll, a child-rights advocate with several international organizations, knew that clothes alone wouldn't help women get and keep a job. So Suited for Change offers career education, too—on office etiquette, interview skills, time management, and the like. Fannie Mae gives a home-buying seminar; Hecht's, Loews Hotels, and other employers describe how their businesses work and sometimes recruit workers on the spot.

Woll's secondary mission is to develop leadership and organizational skills in young women. Nearly all board members are in their twenties or thirties, and every executive director has been under 30. They manage 50 to 70 volunteers, business and community outreach, and a \$200,000 annual budget.

In 1999, Woll helped launch the Women's Alliance to connect similar groups around the country. "I heard from a sister program that offers a dental service," she says. "We want to do that, too."

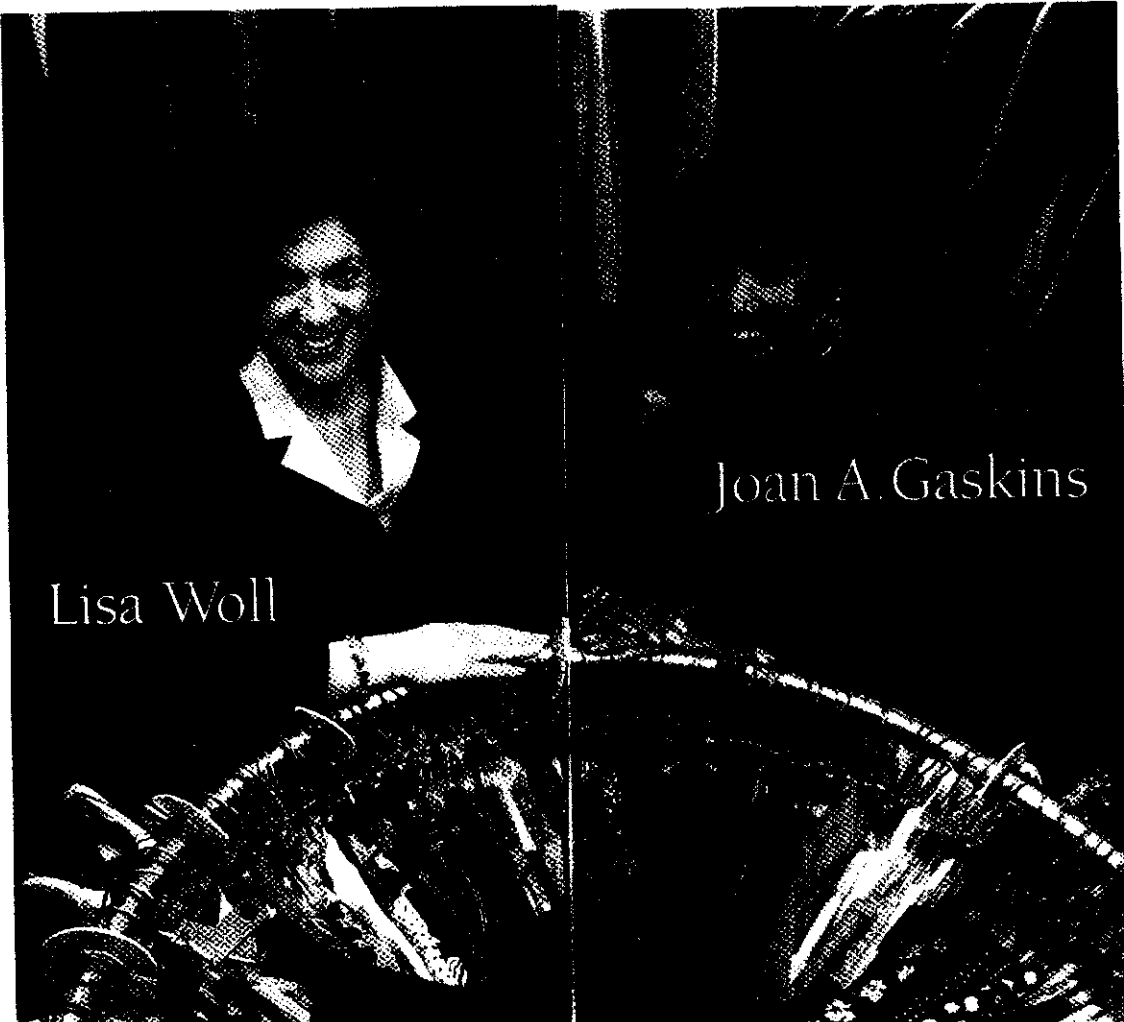


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ast year, the number of on the registry—though ent of its names—jumped

ommunity-affairs coordi- on WHUR, has organized artin Luther King Day, idays, and Christmas. At th-Day Adventist Church, in freezing weather to get l University homecoming i gowns and tuxedos filed s and gave blood samples. s far from home: "Do you ne transplant center in all ?" South Africa's racially nakes it a promising place American minorities, and rking with American doc- ansplant center there. Nelson died without find- onor. But through her ex- man has rallied a city to his efforts have led to 10 narrow transplants. He h for number 11.



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Folge got County and je long, she fou bers for comm eyes of the tr:

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