



Association of Adventist Women

JoAline Gruzensky Olson

— Woman of the Year —

Community Life

2002

JoAline Olson is equally skilled in chairing a hospice board meeting in Napa Valley or presenting a PowerPoint presentation to Earliteen Sabbath School. As president and CEO of St. Helena Hospital, her influence reaches beyond the hospital campus to the Napa Valley, the Pacific Union College Church, and her children's schools.

Olson was the first woman president in St. Helena's 119-year history, and the first female chief executive officer and hospital president within the Adventist Health Care system. Olson brings individuals together and makes things happen.

As an administrator at St. Helena Hospital, her leadership transformed The Women's Center from a dream into reality. Now celebrating

its tenth anniversary, The Women's Center is the focal point of St. Helena Hospital's community activities, offering workshops, seminars, support groups and a health-resource library. In addition, The Women's Center hosts the Community Action Committee and the Latina Advisory Board, two organizations that serve the needs of the local English and Spanish communities.

As the AIDS epidemic spread to rural Northern California, Olson worked with public health officials and clergy and co-founded the Napa Valley AIDS Project. Sixteen years later it remains a viable organization.

As Olson reflected on her daughters' futures, she said, "As I watch my daughters mature, I hope that they'll be



comfortable pursuing whatever careers they want, unlimited by choices labeled 'women's work.' I want them to feel responsible for themselves, their families and their communities."

Mic Thurber, Senior Pastor, Pacific Union College SDA Church said of JoAline: "The good will her workers feel toward her speaks volumes of her abilities, her judgment, and her competency."

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