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**“Protecting  
mental  
health  
is just as  
important  
as protecting  
physical  
health.”**



**Talyn**  
FARBER



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR  
**Stephanie Foisy Mills**

*Welcome to the 2018 Ms. America® Pageant!*



*We* are thrilled tonight to crown the next Ms. America®, Ms. America International® and Ms. International™ 2018. There are 25 beautiful and accomplished women from across the country

vying for the coveted titles and the chance to make a difference in their personal causes. And with power of the crown, the sky is the limit!

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize our outgoing titleholders, Oksana, Tracy and Nova. Each of you have left your own mark, having used your title to its fullest extent. You all leave behind big heels for your successors to fill! I am so proud of each of you and wish you continued successes. Luckily there are no good-byes, as you're forever now part of the Ms. America® Pageant Family.

Thank you to the staff, volunteers, production crew and our Founder and C.E.O. Susan Jeske, for all of your energy, dedication and countless hours spent making this growth opportunity available for women.

Lastly, congratulations to our contestants for representing your states and regions proudly through the volunteer service you have completed. The Ms. America® Class of 2018 has collectively earned the Gold Presidential Volunteerism Award. Good luck to each of you and enjoy your moment to shine in the spotlight this evening.

Sincerely,

*Stephanie*

Dr. Stephanie Foisy Mills  
Director, Ms. America® Pageant



**MS. AMERICA®  
PAGEANT**





**Scott Stewart** has been entertaining audiences since the age of 12 when he was cast on the television show Quincy with Jack Klugman. As a host, actor and singer Scott has appeared in numerous television shows, movies, commercials and music videos including Melrose Place, Executive Decision, Chicago Hope, The Singing Bee, Flavor of Love 3 and was picked to perform on The Oprah Winfrey's Stars of Tomorrow Show. You may have also seen some of his commercials for Big Lots, Mitsubishi, Big 5, Cash 411 and public service announcements for Adopt a Pet. Over the years his many hosting and musical performances include The Academy of Country Music Association, Bob Hope's USO

Show, Disneyland, Mrs. California and Mrs. Nevada pageants and just recently hosted the annual Karaoke Scene Magazine's Crème de la King and Crème de la Kids Competitions. Scott is currently the host and producer of the TV show "What's Up Orange County" that airs on KDOC, Time Warner and Cox Communications.



**Dr. Stephanie Mills** is a Doctor of Chiropractic and former Ms. America 2015. Stephanie has been in the pageant industry for almost thirty years as a contestant, choreographer, judge and director. As Miss New Hampshire 1995 Stephanie represented her state at the 75th anniversary Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City. Dr. Mills is a Presidential Scholar and Summa cum Laude graduate of Palmer College of Chiropractic and is the founder of Crossroads Chiropractic. Stephanie recently co-authored her first book, Adjust Your Life: A Guide to Chiropractic. Dr. Mills has been the host of a local television health talk show and currently hosts a radio

show on WTPL 107.7 FM. Stephanie is "Mom" to two beautiful daughters, Brooke (17) and Emilee (14) who also have enjoyed many successes in pageantry.





# MS. AMERICA PROGRAM AGENDA - PRODUCTION STAFF

## 2018

### MS. AMERICA PROGRAM AGENDA

#### 2018 MS. AMERICA PROGRAM AGENDA

OPENING PRODUCTION NUMBER

PARADE OF CONTESTANTS

INTRODUCTION OF HOSTS

MS. AMERICA 2017 – Oksana Vovk

PRESIDENTIAL AWARD PRESENTATION

ON-STAGE QUESTION

MS. AMERICA INTERNATIONAL 2017 – Tracy Rodgers

PRESIDENTIAL AWARD PRESENTATION

SPORTSWEAR COMPETITION

INTRODUCTION OF JUDGES

MS. INTERNATIONAL 2017 – Nova Kopp

PRESIDENTIAL AWARD PRESENTATION

REINA INTERNATIONAL DEL PACIFICO – Emilee Mills

EVENING GOWN COMPETITION

#### INTERMISSION

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SPECIAL AWARDS

FAREWELL MS. INTERNATIONAL 2017 – Nova Kopp

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MS. INTERNATIONAL 2018

FAREWELL MS. AMERICA INTERNATIONAL 2017 – Tracy Rodgers

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MS. AMERICA INTERNATIONAL 2018

FAREWELL MS. AMERICA 2017 – Oksana Vovk

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TOP 5 FINALISTS

FINAL LOOK AT THE FINALISTS

ANNOUNCEMENT OF RUNNER-UPS

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MS. AMERICA 2018

• On Stage Photo Session

• No one else permitted on stage during this time

## 2018

### PRODUCTION STAFF & SPONSORS

#### 2018 PRODUCTION STAFF

CEO – Susan Jeske

LAWYER – Orrick.com

DIRECTOR – Stephanie Mills

LIVESTREAMING – Ron G. Garrett

OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER – Daniel Pham

PROGRAM BOOK DESIGNER – Apollo Printing & Graphics

PUBLIC RELATIONS – Kelly Bennett

TABULATOR – Donna Vandenberg

VIDEO – Jim Monte

EMCEE – Scott Stewart & Dr. Stephanie Mills

DRESSING ROOM STAFF – Ms. Asmi

ADVISOR – James Irvine

STAFF – Mark Jeske

STAFF – Dee Dee Cringer

STAFF – Brook & Emilee Mills

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Congratulations to each and every one of the Ms. America Pageant contestants on all your hard work, dedication, graciousness and endless beauty that shines from within!

From one woman to another ~ Laura, CEO and Founder, Just Pure Essentials

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO Susan Jeske

On behalf of the Ms. America® Pageant, we would like to welcome the *Class of 2018* outstanding state and regional titleholders and thank them for joining us in this exciting event on board the historic Queen Mary.

The Ms. America® Pageant was founded in 1997 and was created to promote, honor and advance the status of women, celebrate their accomplishments, encourage involvement in community service and to use the "*Crown for a Purpose*" to make a difference.

As the CEO of the Ms. America Pageant Inc., I have the opportunity to meet and work with many of the incredible women who participate in our system every year. I have been able to watch our titleholders and contestants accomplish things that they only dreamed possible. It is undoubtedly true that each of these women inspire others to pursue their personal and professional goals by making an impact not only in their own communities but also around the world. As leaders and role models in their communities, our titleholders work hard to affect positive change on issues they care about. It is our mission to help provide women with opportunities to achieve success and truly change the world. It is my wish that each of them will leave with great memories, strong friendships and an enriching experience.

We would like to extend a sincere "thank you" to Oksana Vovk, MS. AMERICA® 2017, Tracy Rodgers, MS. AMERICA INTERNATIONAL® 2017 and Nova Kopp – MS. INTERNATIONAL™ 2017. Oksana, Tracy and Nova are excellent role models for their peers and those aspiring to be the next MS. AMERICA®, MS. AMERICA® INTERNATIONAL and MS. INTERNATIONAL™. Their dedication and commitment to using the "*Crown for a Purpose*" where

they volunteered hundreds of hours to various charities, has made these three national titleholders an inspiration to women everywhere.

The Ms. America® Pageant would like to thank all the volunteers and sponsors whose efforts before, during and after the pageant made this event a reality and will remain a vital part of its success. Applause – appreciation – and much love is extended to the Judges, Ms. Asmi, Kelly Bennett, Ken Herczeg, Donna Vandenburg, Ron Garrett, Mark Jeske, Daniel Pham, Scott Stewart, Emilee Mills, Brook Mills, and my fiancé James Irvine. Thank you to our sponsors Alert the Globe, Just Pure Essentials, Apollo Printing, Claire's Collection, True Bella Beauty, California Body Sculpt and Orrick. A special Thank You to Martinizing Dry Cleaning who has been a sponsor for over 12 years!

To the new Director of the Ms. America Pageant Stephanie Mills: I could not be prouder to have you take over the Directorship of the pageant. I am looking forward to working with you and taking the pageant to a new level!

With continued support, I will do my best to improve and expand the Ms. America® Pageant in order to continue to celebrate and "*Empower Women Across the Nation and Around The World!*"

Warmest Regards,

*Susan*

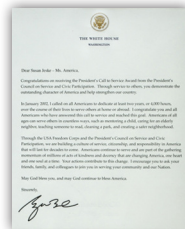


Susan Jeske  
CEO – Ms. America® Pageant  
SusanJeske.com  
Facebook.com/SusanRJeske



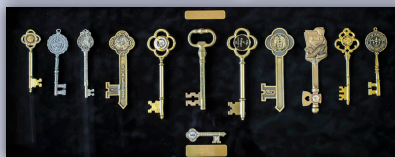
# SUSAN JESKE

THE QUEEN BEHIND THE MS. AMERICA PAGEANT



## PRESIDENTIAL AWARD

Susan Jeske has been involved in the pageant and entertainment industry for over 36 years and is currently the CEO of the Ms. America Pageant. She has traveled to 26 countries as a goodwill ambassador and Presidential envoy for the United States and has been a spokesperson for Fortune 500 Companies. An advocate for volunteerism she has received many awards and in 2004, she received the "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the President of the United States for the thousands of hours she has donated through the years to all kinds of causes and charities in the United States and world-wide.



She has been involved in pageantry since she was 17 years of age as a competitor, judge, pageant producer, director and owner. She has held many local, state, national and international pageant titles and in 1997 at the Luxor Hotel in Las Vegas representing Colorado, Susan bested 50 other contestants and was crowned MS. AMERICA® winning \$75,000 in cash and prizes. During her reign, Susan used her "Crown for a Purpose" and created the "Student's Against Violence" one-hour assembly program where she traveled to high schools across the nation speaking to students about non-violence in schools. For her program she received more than 30 Awards, 15 Keys to the City and Proclamations for her presentation, including a personal letter from the President of the United States. During her reign she was invited by The Knights Templar in the UK and was flown to Scotland where she was "Knighted" by Prince Michael at Sterling Castle for her numerous charity services throughout the world.





## TRADEMARK PLAQUE

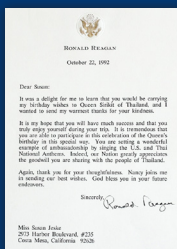
In 1999, Susan purchased the Ms. America Pageant from founder Richard Simon from Houston, Texas and received the register federal trademark from the USPTO in Washington DC in February 2000. The mission of the pageant is to "Empower Women across the Nation." The titleholder is to use her "Crown for a Purpose" that would make

an impact on the world in a positive way.

Her world-wide pageant connections has enabled Susan to send contestants to International pageant competitions all over the world since the 1980's. These have included Miss International held in Japan, Miss World – UK, Miss Asia Pacific International – China, Miss All Nations – Thailand, Miss Progress International – Italy, Miss Tourism – Sri Lanka, Miss Globe International – Albania, Miss Banana Queen – Ecuador, Miss Intercontinental-Panama and Model of the World – Panama. She supported the Miss Earth Pageant from its debut by sending contestants to the pageant for the first 5 years. Currently Susan receives an invitation from the Government of Mexico to travel with a queen to Mazatlán for a week of events and parades, culture, history and ending with the Queen of the Pacific Pageant.

These connections were made after Susan moved to California in 1984 to live with Debbie Maffett, Miss America 1983 and Faye Smith who was the State Director for the Miss California USA Pageant. By the 3rd week of living in California she was chosen to model and perform in the Miss United Nations Goodwill Tour in Thailand. Thru invitations from the Government of different countries, she was invited to compete in pageants all over the world as a Goodwill Ambassador for the United States and was often invited to return and perform for various Charities and events for the country.

In an age before Email, Internet and the fax machine Susan was able to pick up the hard wired phone and use her title and reputation to access the people and put together various projects and accomplish her goals.



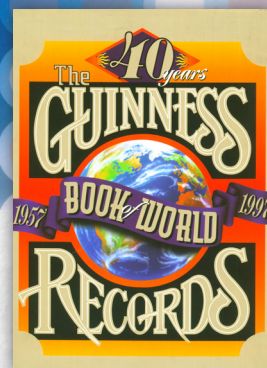
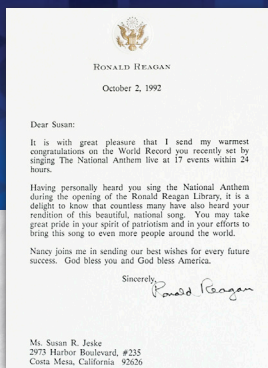
In 1992, Susan was invited by the Thai Arts and Cultural Committee in Thailand to organize a delegation of 12 National and International Beauty Queens to travel to Thailand for the Queens of Thailand's 60th Birthday Celebration. The delegation included Miss World, Miss USA, Miss International, Miss International USA, Miss Flower Queen, Miss All Nations, Star Search Model Winner, Miss California and Miss Teen USA. During their 2 week stay they made over 42 scheduled appearances, featured in 50 newspapers, 10 national TV shows and was on the cover of 3 magazines. The delegation raised \$92,000 for the Queens favorite charity – a poor children's hospital in Bangkok, Thailand. Susan served as a Presidential Envoy for Presidents Clinton and Reagan delivering personal birthday greetings from the two Presidents during a private meeting with Her Majesty Queen Sirikit.





A professional singer, Susan has performed at more than 1500 events before audiences that include 7 United States Presidents, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the Queen of Thailand, Opening of the Ronald Reagan Library, the STS 102 Space Shuttle Discovery Launch of March 2001, President George W. Bush Inauguration, Denver Broncos Televised Super Bowl Victory Party, LA Angels playoffs, several Prime Ministers and Ambassadors all over the world. In 1985, as Miss California American Beauty, she was invited to entertain the troops on a USO Tour to Turkey,

Italy, Greece and Spain. The USO troop was flown on C-30 planes to all the military bases and on several aircraft carriers including the ships the Saratoga, SS San Diego and Coronado.

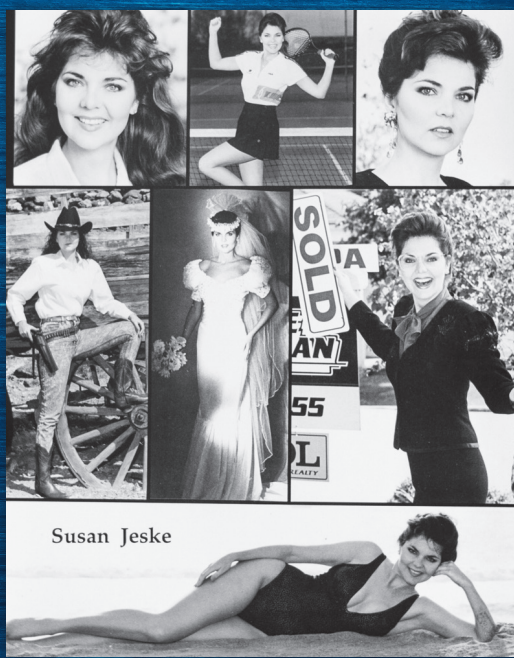


## GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS

In 1993 Susan, set the World Record, published in the Guinness Book of World Records for singing the National Anthem at the most events in a 24 hour period raising \$93,000 for children charities. Her world record was featured in 8 Guinness Book of World Records and to this day no one has been able to break her World Record although there have been 7 attempts.







A professional model and spokesperson she was invited twice on a 10 city-wide tour in Mexico with reigning Miss USA and Miss Universe 1984 Mai Shanley and Yvonne Ryding as a model and spokesperson for Le Petit Jean Shoes. They traveled in a private jet to events and promotions for the Beverly Hills shoe line. The following year she was chosen as the new Spokesperson with a four year contract for Hyundai Motor America where she traveled to 14 cities per years making appearances at car shows and promotional events. In addition, Susan was also a spokesperson for Norelco, Mazak, Panasonic, Proctor & Gamble, True Elements Skin Care and many other companies. In the 1980's and 90's she appeared regularly on daytime Soap Operas "Days of our Lives," "Young and

the Restless," "Bold and the Beautiful," and is seen in movies and television commercials.

In her career as an independent image, beauty and etiquette consultant, Susan has advised corporate executives, political and community leaders. She has written for newspapers and magazines as a columnist, and appeared on radio and television. Known as "The Queen Maker" Susan is acclaimed as one of the best and most sought after pageant coaches in the world and has worked with many girls who have gone on to win many state, national and international beauty titles. A licensed Esthetician and pioneer for Safe Cosmetics, she campaigned for 3 years and helped introduce the Personal Care Products Safety Act of 2015 which asks for full ingredient

disclosure for professional salon products and web-based sales of cosmetic products and directing the FDA to assess a safety of a minimum of 5 cosmetic chemicals a year. Currently the bill is being introduced to the House of Senate by Senator Feinstein and Susan Collins.

Other Awards Have Included: "Governor and First Lady Award" from California State Governor, "Woman of the Year Award" from the Leukemia Society, "Commanding Generals Award" from the U.S. Marine Corp, "Congressional Community Service Award" from the California Legislature Assembly Resolution, "Constellation Patriot Award" from the National Flag Foundation, "Priority One Award" from Kiwanis International and "Ambassador Award" from Guard A Heart Foundation.





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# *Our National Titleholders*



**Ms. International  
2017**

**Ms. America  
2017**

**Ms. America International  
2017**

*Nova  
Kopp*

*Oksana  
Vouk*

*Tracy  
Rodgers*



**MS. AMERICA®  
PAGEANT**





# Oksana Vouk, Ms. America 2017



*"Looking back at the amazing year being Ms. America 2017, I am very grateful to everyone who stood by my side and supported me every step of the way during this phenomenal journey. Thank you to my Family, you are the best: always there for me and with me, my Mom Valentina, my sister Mariah and my son Stefan. Thank you to Ms. America Pageant and Ms. Susan Jeske for an opportunity of a lifetime and life-long memories. Thank you to all my sponsors and supporters who assisted with my appearances and made it happen every time. Special thank you to Daniel and Diana Pham for my amazing photos that show your incredible talent and professionalism. Thank you to all press release agencies for making it possible to send a message across America and internationally about greatness and importance of making the world a better place. Thank you everyone and let's continue to make a positive difference! My title made me realize that winning is just the beginning and we must always strive for bigger and better grounds in life to be in a position to help others."*





*Oksana Vouk,  
Ms. America  
2017*

*"Over 100  
appearances!"*





# *Oksana Vouk, Ms. America 2017*



*"Thank you so much to an amazing couture designer, Eleonora Altamore for a beautiful gift, a purse she named "Oksana" and dedicated to me and my mission. This purse was the winner of over 300 exhibitors in Milan and shows Eleonora's incredible talent and unique vision of beauty. "*



# Ms. International comes to Ballina to volunteer!

**B**allina Community Centre was graced with a touch of glamour on Monday, when the former Ms. Georgia and current Ms International, Nova Pearson Kopp, gave up some of her holiday time in Ireland to volunteer with the Meals on Wheels service.

Ms Kopp was on a trip to Ballina with her husband, Mark Kopp, and was put in touch with Mayo Volunteer Centre when she expressed an interest in volunteering while here.

The Centre was delighted to help her find a way to contribute during her visit, and she spent some time assisting in the Vincents charity shop and with delivering meals to older and disabled people.

Fiona Cunnane, Manager of Mayo Volunteer Centre said, "We were delighted to be able to help Nova find a way to volunteer during her short stay in Ballina. She is a very accomplished person, who is a great advocate for community service where she lives in the U.S, serving on many voluntary Boards, and has a particular interest in assisting people affected by domestic violence. Our role in the Volunteer Centre is to help everyone get involved in volunteering – so whether you have done it before or not, and no matter how much time you have available, we can help you find a volunteer role to suit you!"

**Mayo Volunteer Centre are currently encouraging people to nominate volunteers for a Volunteer Ireland Award.** The awards are open to volunteers of all ages in the Republic of Ireland. There are ten different award categories, along with the prestigious Christine Buckley Volunteer of the Year award.

"There are many people in Mayo, who, like Nova, commit their time to volunteering. These awards provide an opportunity to showcase this diverse group of people and say thank you for their remarkable work," Fiona added.

Anyone can nominate a volunteer, and the ten categories are:

- Animals and Environment
- Arts, Culture and Media
- Campaigning and Awareness Raising
- Children and Youth
- Community
- Safety and Emergency Services
- Health and Disability
- Social Work and Social Inclusion
- Sports and Recreation
- Outstanding Group

This year sees the introduction of a new award for groups, to recognise the teams of volunteers across the country that work together to make a difference. There will also be a special commendation for Volunteer Manager of the Year. Every single person nominated for an award will receive a special 'thank you' card from Volunteer Ireland.

All shortlisted applicants are automatically eligible for the overall Volunteer of the Year Award. Nominations close at midnight on Friday 6th October and can be made online at [www.volunteer.ie](http://www.volunteer.ie). The Christine Buckley Volunteer of the Year Award along with the ten category winners will be announced at a gala awards ceremony on Friday 1st December in the Radisson Hotel, Sligo. The event fittingly coincides with the closing ceremony that ends Sligo's year as the European Volunteering Capital. All shortlisted nominees along with their guests will be invited to the ceremony to enjoy a much-deserved night of celebration.



**Supporting  
Local  
Initiatives**

**For further info:  
Edel Gallagher,  
Mayo Volunteer Centre  
T: 083 4471147  
Email: [edel@volunteermayo.ie](mailto:edel@volunteermayo.ie)**





# Nova Kopp

MS. INTERNATIONAL 2017



*Words cannot describe* the honor this title has brought to me this past year as Ms. International 2017 and the People's choice winner. Beyond the glam and prestige of the Ms. International crowning. It has been an honor, a blessing, and privilege to donate \$12, 500 that I awarded to some phenomenal charities. (Girls of Grit, Gia's Eyes, Hillside, Inc., YWCA). My main purpose in life has always been in serving others and this crown gave me the opportunity to broaden my outreach not only domestically but Internationally. I want to thank Ms. Susan Jeske and the Ms. America Pageant for giving me the platform to reach as far and wide to touch the lives of others.

*Being Ms. International* was deeper than just a Crown. It comes with the responsibilities of leading the way and setting high standard of what it means to be a National title holder. There was no better way for me to serve than participating and promoting such amazing causes and giving a voice to victims.

*There is no way* I could no way I could have made this journey without my husband. He has been my strength, co-laborer, and my biggest supporter. We traveled domestically/International raising awareness and funds for some great causes. One of our International trips that touched my heart was traveling to Ireland to volunteer at the Vincents charity shop and delivering meals to older and disabled people. In addition, I was honored to do a photo shoot at the Belleek Castle and the Mount Falcon Castle. To my family, friends, and sponsors I am very blessed to have your support and encouragement along the way.

*To the next Ms. International*, this year will be what you make of it, so make it a great year changing the lives of others. This title brings with it more than just a crown and sash. It comes with a responsibility of being a role model representing your causes to the best of your ability. Get ready for a hectic, adventurous memorable year of your life. Yes, 2017 was such an amazing year for me.

**I will always cherish all the special memories and the opportunities this platform provided me in brining awareness and aid to so many good causes.**

*-Nova Kopp*

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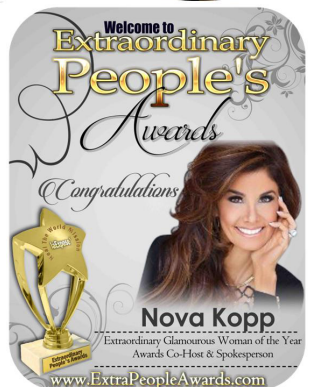
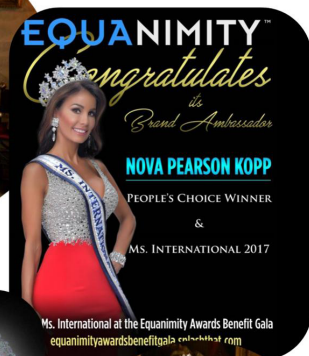


# Nova Kopp

*My year of service...*

## MS. INTERNATIONAL 2017

**November 6, 2017** - Hills/AT&T Employee Giving Campaign, Atlanta, Georgia  
**November 5, 2017** - Chili Cookoff, Atlanta Georgia  
**November 1, 2017** - Charity Water Campaign Atlanta, Georgia  
**October 28, 2017** - The Spin Awards, Atlanta, Georgia  
**October 21, 2017** - Northpoint Pumpkin Carving Event, Atlanta, Georgia  
**October 29, 2017** - Judge for South Eastern Sunshine, Atlanta, Georgia  
**September 27, 2017** - Family First Community Fundraiser, Warner Robins, Georgia  
**September 15, 2017** - Equanimity Magazine Contributor, Dallas, TX  
**September 9, 2017** - Mentoring Session at Northpoint, Atlanta, Georgia  
**September 8, 2017** - Fundraiser for slain Police officer, Mayo, Ireland  
**September 7, 2017** - Volunteering for Homeless Shelter Mayo, Ireland  
**September 6, 2017** - Volunteering Meals for Wheels, Mayo, Ireland  
**September 5, 2017** - Photo Shoot at the Bellek Castle, Mayo, Ireland  
**August 16, 2017** - Equanimity Magazine Contributor, Dallas TX  
**August 13, 2017** - Mentoring Northpoint, Atlanta, Georgia  
**August 6, 2017** - Heart Walk Fundraiser, Atlanta, Georgia  
**July 24, 2017** - Back to School Drive, Atlanta Georgia  
**July 23, 2017** - Back to School Drive, Atlanta, Georgia  
**July 22, 2017** - Mistress of Ceremonies for Take the Crown, Atl, Georgia  
**July 15, 2017** - Equanimity Magazine Contributor, Dallas, TX  
**July 8, 2017** - Say Yes to the Dress, Atlanta, Georgia  
**June 24, 2017** - Woman of God Conference Dallas, Texas  
**June 20, 2017** - Extraordinary People Campaign, Atlanta, GA  
**June 15, 2017** - Equanimity Magazine Contributor, Dallas, TX  
**June 11, 2017** - Ms. Georgia America, Atlanta GA  
**May 27, 2017** - Ms. Hemisphere Judge, Atlanta, GA  
**May 25, 2017** - Equanimity Magazine Contributor, Dallas, TX  
**May 5, 2017** - National Military Appreciation Campaign  
**May 3, 2017** - Volunteered Atlanta Food Bank, Atlanta, Georgia  
**April 15, 2017** - Equanimity Magazine Contributor, Dallas, TX  
**April 10, 2017** - Recipient of the PVSA, Atlanta, GA  
**April 5, 2017** - The Petra Radio Show in Atlanta, GA  
**April 1, 2017** - Awarded Top 5 Best Hair of 2017, Atlanta, GA  
**March 25, 2017** - Clean Water Campaign for Africa Equanimity, Dallas, TX  
**March 15, 2017** - Equanimity Magazine Contributor, Dallas, TX  
**February 25, 2017** - Miss Suwanee Relay Judge, Atlanta, GA  
**February 13, 2017** - Awarded Top 10 Ms. Evening Gowns of 2017, Atlanta, GA  
**January 29, 2017** - 2017 Cobb County Annual Gala, Atlanta, GA  
**January 23, 2017** - AT&T Employee Takeover Instagram campaign, Atlanta, GA  
**January 15, 2017** - RIM Pageant Judge in Atlanta, GA  
**December 20, 2016** - Toys for Tots Drive, Atlanta, GA  
**December 15, 2016** - Model gowns for True Elegance photo shoot, Atlanta, GA  
**December 5, 2016** - Christmas Toy Drive, Atlanta, GA  
**December 1, 2016** - Presented Hillside, Inc. with People's Choice award, Atlanta, GA  
**November 28, 2016** - Presented Rose of Sharon Academy People's Choice award, Atlanta, GA  
**November 27, 2016** - Presented Through Gia's eyes People's Choice award, Atlanta, GA  
**November 25, 2016** - Equanimity Magazine Contributor, Dallas, TX  
**November 19, 2016** - Presented Hillside, Inc. with People's Choice award, Atlanta, GA  
**November 18, 2016** - YWCA Board Meeting, Atlanta, GA  
**November 6, 2016** - Girls Get your Hair wet fundraiser, Atlanta, GA  
**November 1, 2016** - Atlanta Food Bank event, Atlanta, GA  
**October 29, 2016** - Chili Cook Off event, Atlanta, GA  
**October 26, 2016** - YWCA fundraiser/People's Choice recipient, Atlanta, GA  
**October 24, 2016** - Model for Bondseye Apparel photo shoot, Atlanta, GA  
**October 23, 2016** - Awarded Ambassador for Equanimity, Dallas, TX  
**October 22, 2016** - Meeting with CEO and Editor for Equanimity Magazine, Dallas TX  
**October 21, 2016** - Red Carpet Event for Equanimity, Dallas TX  
**October 21, 2016** - Interview with Telemundo, Dallas TX  
**October 15, 2016** - Official visit to Fit for a Queen, sponsored Red Carpet Gala, Atlanta, GA  
**September 26, 2016** - The Shirleyann Radio Show in Atlanta, GA  
**September 25, 2016** - YWCA board meeting in Marietta, GA  
**September 24, 2016** - Apple Festival Pageant Judge in Eljay, GA  
**September 17, 2016** - Extraordinary People's Philanthropist of the Year in Ft. Lauderdale, FL  
**September 17, 2016** - Extraordinary People's Glamorous Woman of the Year in Ft Lauderdale, FL  
**September 16, 2016** - Extraordinary People's Award Co-host in Ft. Lauderdale, FL  
**September 12, 2016** - Employee Giving Campaign Fundraiser at AT&T in Atlanta, GA  
**September 9-12, 2016** - Vertical Reality Mentoring Weekend at Blue Ridge Mountains, GA  
**September 6, 2016** - Heart Walk Fundraiser Captain at AT&T in Atlanta, GA  
**September 4, 2016** - Official photoshoot with Pham Photography Group in Anaheim, CA  
**September 3, 2016** - Crowned Ms. International 2017 at Curtis Theatre in Brea, CA





# Tracy Lynn Rodgers

"Your Tomorrow Starts Today."



MS. AMERICA INTERNATIONAL 2017



# Tracy Lynn Rodgers



Where do you possibly begin to tell a story that was at least 5 years in the making... January 23, 2011; the car accident which turned my life upside down, and inside out. What I found over the past 6 years was that God had another plan for me. This road has not been easy. There are some days I've wanted to quit, but on September 3, 2016, I came back to finish a race I started back in 2011. I walked a national pageant stage to win the title of Ms. America International 2017; what a wonderful year it has been. I've been able to travel the United States from coast-to-coast, sharing my message and life story with people of all walks of life, who also have their own long roads to walk. I've been able to share my platform: "Your Tomorrow Starts Today," which is a message about my personal story and life. It is a message of hope, and inspiration, and perseverance; reiterating that no adverse event or circumstance gets to define you.

*I* want to thank the Susan Jeske, and the Ms. America Pageant, for this amazing and wonderful opportunity. Susan has provided an avenue for women everywhere to bring their hopes and dreams to a stage, where dreams truly do come true. A special "thank you" to Oksana and Nova. I love you both so much and have loved sharing this 2017 year with you as "sister queens." I couldn't have imagined sharing the stage with better women than the Ms. America Class of 2017. This group of women embodied the very essence of kindness, charity, intelligence, hard work, talent, brains and beauty; all combined on one stage. It was truly and honor to share the stage and rub shoulders with some of the finest women I've ever met. I love pageantry and the sisterhood that is formed with so many amazing women

*I* also want to thank my Heavenly Father for bringing me to this path, and blessing me to be strong enough to go down it.

*Lastly*, but certainly not least, I want to thank my wonderful boys: Derrick and Damon, my daughter-in-law: Karlee, my sisters: Jeanette and Erica, my brothers: Jeff and Kendall, my mom and dad: Marilyn and Garth, my best friends and family... thank you so very, very much!!! It truly brings tears to my eyes for the love and gratitude I feel for all of you. I couldn't have done this journey without the love and support you all have shown me. Thank you for the encouragement to come back and finish this race. Thank you for believing in me.

*I hope that my life message will always shine on; "Your Tomorrow Starts Today."*

## MS. AMERICA INTERNATIONAL 2017



# Tracy Lynn Rodgers

## MS. AMERICA INTERNATIONAL 2017

December 29, 2017—Interview with View On Magazine, Mesquite, NV.  
 December 27, 2017—Teach Winning Interview Skills and Techniques to Miss Southern Nevada America Contestants, Las Vegas, NV.  
 December 15, 2017—Host and speak at Free Doctors' Clinic Christmas Dinner, St. George, UT.  
 December 1, 2017—Cover of Southern Utah Neighbors Magazine, St. George, UT.  
 December 1, 2017—Video by Dr. George Alexander regarding "What is Beauty?" Las Vegas, NV.  
 November 26, 2017—Guest Speaker, "Miracles at Mile Marker 97," Frisco, TX.  
 November 24, 2017—Appearing on Dr. George Alexander webpage, Las Vegas, NV.  
 November 23, 2017—Announcement by Pageant Cast that I'll be a guest speaker January 31, 2018.  
 November 15, 2017—Moapa Valley Progress Newspaper Article, Logandale, NV.  
 November 11, 2017—Video with Kubex Fitness, St. George, UT.  
 November 10, 2017—Veteran's Day Ceremony, Cedar City, UT.  
 November 5, 2017—Attend NPC Steve Karr Las Vegas Classic, Las Vegas, NV.  
 November 4, 2017—Guest at the Pomegranate Festival, Logandale, NV.  
 November 1, 2017—Interview by Fit Physical Therapy, St. George, UT  
 October 28, 2017—First Responder's Car Show Celebration, Washington, UT  
 October 27, 2017—Best Expo Ever at the Dixie Convention Center, St. George, UT  
 October 11, 2017—Guest at Miss Las Vegas Nevada America talking about platforms, Las Vegas, NV  
 October 4, 2017—Guest at Wild on Wounds Conference, Las Vegas, NV  
 October 2, 2017—Photoshoot for St. George Magazine, St. George, UT  
 September 30, 2017—Support Walk For Suicide Prevention, St. George, UT  
 September 17, 2017—Miss Nevada High School America Pageant, Las Vegas, NV  
 September 17, 2017—Guest at the Miss Las Vegas Nevada America parent meeting, Las Vegas, NV  
 September 15, 2017—Guest Speaker, "Your Tomorrow Starts Today," Chicago, IL  
 September 9, 2017—Meet and Greet Glen Helen Raceway, Glen Helen, CA  
 September 4, 2017—Labor Day at the Iron County Fair, Parowan, UT  
 August 31, 2017—Volunteer at Doctors' Volunteer Clinic, St. George, UT  
 August 26, 2017—Attend Mrs. America Pageant, Las Vegas, NV  
 August 24, 2017—Volunteer at Doctors' Volunteer Clinic, St. George, UT  
 August 19, 2017—Adult Masquerade Ball Guest, St. George, UT  
 August 18, 2017—Attend swearing in of new American Citizens, St. George, UT  
 August 17, 2017—Volunteer at Doctors' Volunteer Clinic, St. George, UT  
 August 16, 2017—Donations to Big Brother Big Sister, St. George, UT  
 August 10, 2017—Volunteer at Doctors' Volunteer Clinic, St. George, UT  
 August 5, 2017—Guest at Women's Conference, St. George, UT  
 July 30, 2017—VIP Guest Queen at the Mrs. Vietnam Pageant, Las Vegas, NV  
 July 29, 2017—Attend the Mrs. Vietnam Pageant VIP Guest Party, Las Vegas, NV  
 July 12, 2017—Judge at Premier World Pageant—Finals with after pageant party.  
 July 11, 2017—Judge at Premier World Pageant—Interview, Las Vegas, NV  
 July 7, 2017—Featured in Pageantry and PromTime Magazine under Celebrity Spotlight.  
 July 4, 2017—Attend July 4<sup>th</sup> festivities in Cedar City, Utah wearing Bling It apparel.  
 July 2, 2017—Attend Miss NV, AZ, CA Globe United States Crowning Ceremony.  
 June 23, 2017—Guest Speaker on Pageantry Now: "Your Tomorrow Starts Today."  
 June 16, 2017—Attend the Miss Nevada America State Pageant, Las Vegas, NV  
 June 14, 2017—Keynote Speaker at the Oregon Risk Insurance Management Society Conference—  
 "Surviving Mile Marker 97—Your Tomorrow Starts Today." Portland, OR  
 June 13, 2017—Guest at the Speaker's Dinner Reception sponsored by the Oregon Risk Insurance Management Society, Portland, OR  
 June 10, 2017—Attend the Mrs. And Ms. Earth Pageant in Las Vegas, NV.  
 May 20, 2017—Attend Pageant Reception/Gala, Las Vegas, NV  
 May 10, 2017—Attend Black Dress Event, Las Vegas, NV  
 May 10, 2017—Attend Cosmopolitan Connection All White Party, Las Vegas, NV  
 May 7, 2017—Attend Miss Nevada United States Pageant, Las Vegas, NV  
 April 22, 2017—Guest Speaker at the Nevada Cinderella State Pageant Office—  
 "Your Tomorrow Starts Today." Las Vegas, NV  
 April 13, 2017—Judge at the Clark County, NV Cinderella Pageant, Logandale, NV  
 April 8, 2017—Keynote Speaker at the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants Forum in Portland, OR.  
 "Surviving Mile Marker 97—Your Tomorrow Starts Today." Portland, OR  
 March 31, 2017—Meet and Greet at Orthopedic Specialists with Dr. Sylvain and autograph signing, Las Vegas, NV  
 March 24, 2017—Attendance at Rumi Awards Broadcast with Interview, Model Elementz Jewelry, Las Vegas, NV  
 March 23, 2017—Meet and Greet at Select Physical Therapy with photograph signing, Henderson, NV  
 March 11, 2017—Attend WORCS Series Race at Havasu, AZ, wearing my Bling It tee.  
 March 5, 2017—Attend the Mrs. Nevada America Pageant, Las Vegas, NV  
 February 26, 2017—Emcee Miss Boulder City Pageant, Boulder City, NV  
 February 22, 2017—Guest Speaker to youth group in Frisco, TX: "Your Tomorrow Starts Today, Frisco, TX  
 February 7, 2017—Helicopter tour of Las Vegas Strip with CEO, Susan Jeske  
 February 6, 2017—Attend Tony Sacca's Funeral, Las Vegas, NV  
 February 2, 2017—Donation event of pageant items to Miss Las Vegas Pageant Closet  
 January 22, 2017—Judge the Miss Las Vegas America Pageant  
 January 22, 2017—Judge the Miss Clark County America Pageant  
 January 21, 2017—Ladies Who Dine Event  
 January 20, 2017—Received Letter of Recognition from the Pageant Help Hall of Fame.  
 January 18, 2017—Judges Orientation of the America Pageant system.  
 December 21, 2016—Cosmopolitan Connection event at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, NV  
 December 18, 2016—Make sandwiches and go serve the homeless through the Giving Hope Operation, Las Vegas, NV  
 December 17, 2016—Donate to the Just One Foundation children for Christmas.  
 December 15, 2016—Donate blood at United Blood Services, Las Vegas, NV.  
 December 14, 2016—Receive Letter of Commendation from Mayor Andy Hafen.  
 December 11, 2016—Guest speaker at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on my story and platform, Henderson, NV  
 December 3, 2016—Work at Santa's Workshop for the Just One Foundation.  
 December 3, 2016—Donate clothing items and support Pole Cats Fitness and Safe House Foundation.  
 November 13, 2016—Serve at Veteran's Village for the Just One Project, Las Vegas, NV  
 November 9, 2016—Guest speaker at a Women's Conference in Cedar City, UT, on my platform, "Your Tomorrow Starts Today."  
 November 11, 2016—Mesquite Local News: Veteran's Day Parade Article  
 November 6, 2016—Meet with Rita Mezrahi at Clair's Collection for Pageant Gowns, Los Angeles, CA  
 November 5, 2016—Ride in the Mesquite, NV, Veteran's Day Parade.



November 4, 2016—Model Elementz Jewelry at the Lily, Bellagio, Las Vegas, NV.  
 October 20, 2016—Volunteer at the JBJ Soul Kitchen in Red Bank, NJ.  
 October 19, 2016—Meet Jon Bon Jovi, David Bryan, and Tico at the NYC JBJ Runaway Tour, New York City, NY  
 October 18, 2016—Carlos Bakery in Hoboken, NJ.  
 October 16, 2016—Live Interview with PageantryNow on YouTube.  
 October 15, 2016—Monster Energy Cup wearing my new Ms. America International 2017 apparel by "Bling It."  
 October 14, 2016—Just One Project Masquerade Gala.  
 October 14, 2016—Luncheon with CEO and director for Ms. America, Susan Jeske.  
 October 14, 2016—LA workout session with celebrity trainer and P90X Instructor, Tony Latimore.  
 October 13, 2016—Meet and greet with the office staff of Dr. Erich Herber, DDS, Temecula, CA.  
 October 5, 2016—Meeting with celebrity dress designer, Debbie Carroll, Las Vegas, NV.  
 October 4, 2016—Spotlight by the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants Membership News.  
 September 30, 2016—Spotlight by PageantryNow.  
 September 29, 2016—Mesquite Local News article - "Beauty Beat Her Beast."  
 September 27, 2016—Turn for the Judges: Announcement of Ms. America 2017 Queens.  
 September 24, 2016—Guest at the El Segundo Sol Cooking Fiesta with Chef Saul Garcia, Las Vegas, NV  
 September 21, 2016—Appearance at the Neon Themed Party at the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas, NV, with Yvette Auger celebrating the release of the Bliss Babe Magazine.  
 September 21, 2016—Meeting with Mayor Allan Litman, of Mesquite, NV.  
 September 21, 2016—Interview with Mesquite Local News regarding crowning of Ms. America International 2017.  
 September 17, 2016—Guest on The Pulse 107.7 WPTL Radio Show, Half Hour to Health, with Dr. Stephanie Mills, regarding Concussion Awareness Day.  
 September 17, 2016—Interview with Paul Harasim, of the Las Vegas Review Journal, on Elder Neglect and Abuse in Nevada's Nursing Homes.  
 September 15, 2016—Guest at the San Gennaro Feast, in North Las Vegas, with Tony Sacca and Mayor John Lee.  
 September 14, 2016—Appearance at Bottiglia Cucina Enoteca, with Yvette Auger, of the Cosmopolitan Connection.  
 September 7, 2016—Las Vegas.Net: Article covering the crowning of Ms. America International 2017.  
 September 7, 2016—Las Vegas Review Journal covered the crowning of Ms. America International 2017.  
 September 7, 2016—Moapa Valley Progress covered the crowning of Ms. America International 2017.  
 September 5, 2016—Today.com updated story with Ms. America International 2017 crowning.  
 September 4, 2016—Official photoshoot with Pham Photography Group in Anaheim, CA.  
 September 3, 2016—Interview with Scott Stewart of What's Up Orange County.  
 September 3, 2016—Crowned as Ms. America International 2017 at the Curtis Theatre in Brea, CA.





# Emilee Mills

**Reina Internacional del Pacifico 2017**  
**Miss Pacific U.S. 2017**

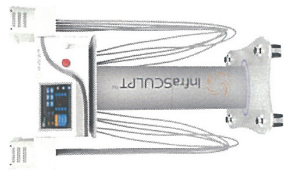
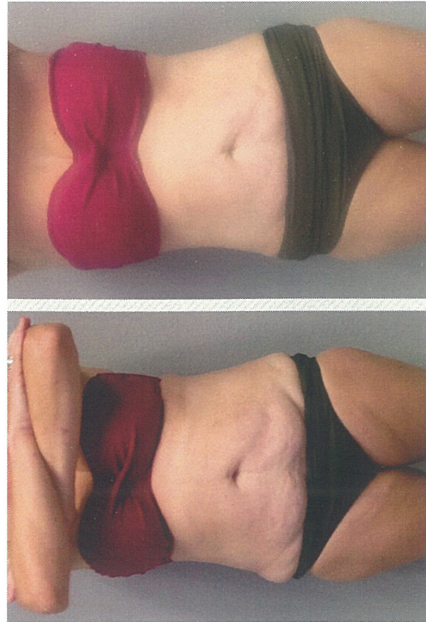
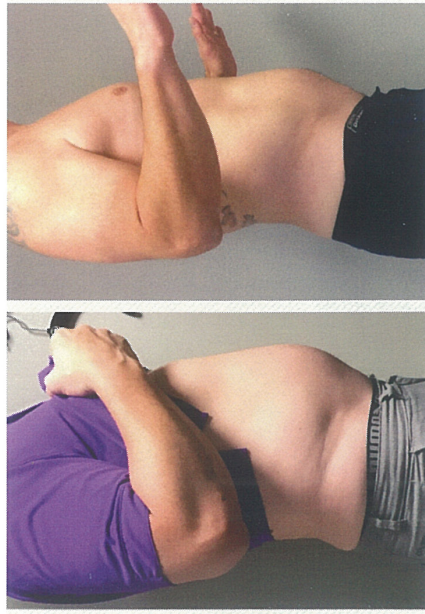
The opportunity to travel to Mazatlán, Mexico as Miss Pacific U.S. 2017 to represent the Pacific Coast of the United States was a once in a lifetime experience. I was overwhelmed by the hospitality and generosity of the people of Mazatlán.

As contestants, we met local dignitaries, toured the city, participated in Carnival events including two huge parades, and competed at the international pageant held at the Lions Club. All of the contestants were beautiful and represented their countries proudly. I was beyond shocked to hear my name called as the winner. As the youngest contestant, I didn't think it could possibly be me!

Thank you to my director, Susan Jeske, as well as the staff, volunteers and directors of the Reina Internacional del Pacifico Pageant. I had the time of my life before the crown was placed on my head. Remember, it is the journey, not the crown, that makes pageantry so rewarding.







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# HALL OF FAME

## MS. AMERICA®



Oksana Vovk  
2017



Julie Harman  
2016



Stephanie Mills  
2014-15



Chiniqua Pettaway  
2013



Nicole Rash  
2012



Tracy Broughton  
2011



Bridget Cleary  
2009-10



Jane Park Smith  
2007-08



Debbie Nelson  
2006-07



Vida Samadzai  
2005-06



Deana Aburto  
2004-05



Susan Jeske  
The First  
Ms. America

## MS. AMERICA® INTERNATIONAL



Tracy Rodgers  
2017



E-Dee Martin  
2016



Laura Hunter  
2014-15



Robin Griffin  
2013



Carla Gonzalez  
2012



Kimberly Vodang  
2011



Tram Ho  
2007



Stephanie Brownell  
2005-06



Raquel Beezley  
2004-05



Jessica Schilling  
2003-04



Casey Burns  
2002-03



MS. AMERICA®



# HALL OF FAME

## MS. INTERNATIONAL™



Nova Kopp  
2017



Deborah  
Valis-Flynn  
2016



Riti Chikkerur  
2014-15



Stacy Smith  
2013



Deana Molle  
2011-12



Amanda Delgado  
2010-11

## MS. AMERICA® BEAUTY



Bethany Haas  
2006-07



Kardena Pauza  
2006-07

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MS. AMERICA 2017



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# MS. AMERICA 2018 CONTESTANTS



**MS. ALABAMA**  
Lilly T. Nguyen



**MS. ARIZONA**  
Cheyenne Autumn Warner



**MS. CALIFORNIA**  
Monica Zaragoza



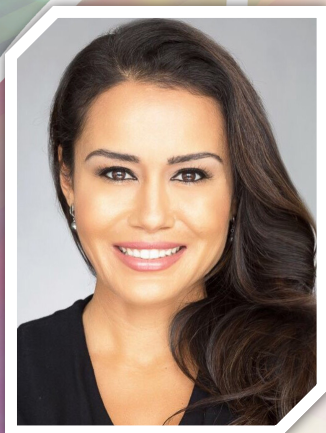
**MS. FLORIDA**  
Carlie Gintoli



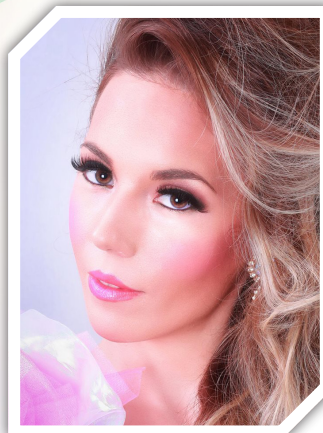
**MS. GEORGIA**  
LaTresa Cunningham



**MS. GREATER CALIFORNIA**  
Dr. Dawn Mooney Digrius



**MS. HAWAII**  
Mokihaana Maldonado



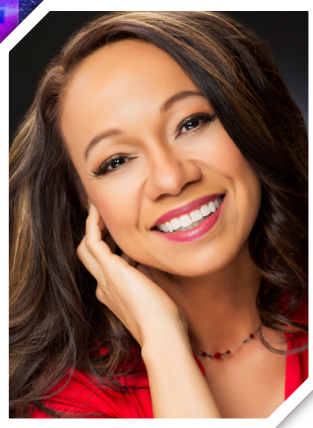
**MS. ILLINOIS**  
Sherrie Gearhart



**MS. MICHIGAN**  
Tiffany Scott



# MS. AMERICA 2018 CONTESTANTS



**MS. NEVADA**  
Tina Abbantangelo



**MS. NEW YORK**  
Jolyn Farber



**MS. NORTH FLORIDA**  
Dee Lane



**MS. OHIO**  
Raquel Zornes



**MS. PACIFIC COAST**  
Gelsah De Damas



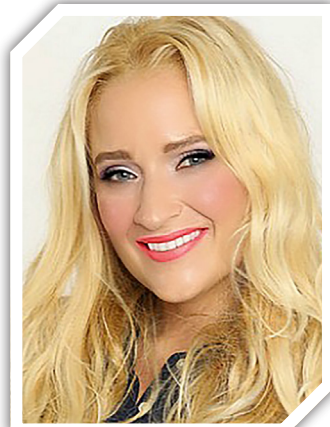
**MS. SONORAN DESERT**  
Kimberly McDermott



**MS. SOUTH CAROLINA**  
Cheryl McDermott



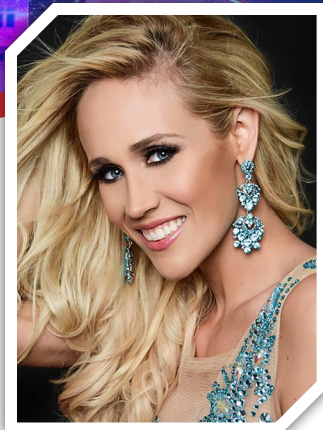
**MS. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**  
Angela McMahon



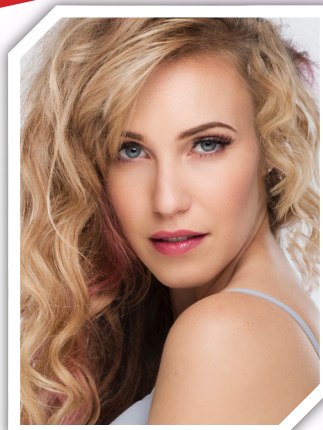
**MS. TENNESSEE**  
Lisa Milan



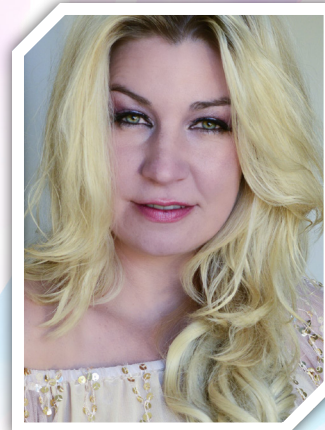
# MS. AMERICA 2018 CONTESTANTS



**MS. TEXAS**  
Sarah Ramsey



**MS. UTAH**  
Danielle Cox



**MS. VIRGINIA**  
Cassandra Malone



**MS. WASHINGTON**  
Patrice Nicole Harris



**MS. WEST COAST**  
Briana Courts



**MS. WISCONSIN**  
Brittany Wagner



**MS. WYOMING**  
Holley Nicholson



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Cell: 818-268-0192





# Monica ZARAGOZA

MS. CALIFORNIA  
AMERICA 2018

**PLATFORM:**  
POSITIVE MIND,  
BODY, & SOUL

*Thank You!*

To my wonderful  
family and friends for  
all their love and support  
through this journey. I am  
so grateful for all of you.





# Monica Zaragoza



BELIEVE IN YOURSELF,  
LOVE WHO YOU ARE,  
AND NEVER GIVE UP.





# MONICA

## ZARAGOZA

Ms. California America 2018

### Positive Mind, Body & Soul

Empowering young girls and women through their own personal journeys, to trust and believe in themselves and to shine in their own element.







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## “Educate to Elevate”

Dr. Dawn Mooney Digrius, Ms. Greater California America 2018, strives to promote education as the key to personal and professional success through her platform, “Educate to Elevate” and her work as Executive Director of STEM Advantage, a 501(c)3 based in Orange County, California.



Success should not be determined by the zip code you were born in or how much money you have; it should be measured by the level of education you have attained and we should all encourage the pursuit of knowledge through education.

Our families, our communities, our world will be the better for it!





**Dr. Dawn Mooney Digrius, Ms. Greater California America 2018, thanks the following for their generous support:**

Robert F. Smith  
Heather Digrius  
Andrew Digrius  
Bill & Fran Mooney  
Chris Doll  
Michael Dray  
Grace Genevic  
Sara Garcia,  
Naturel Lash  
& Brow, Long Beach  
Debby Kumar,  
Xtend Barre,  
Pasadena  
Frida Mendez,  
Saks Fifth Avenue, South Coast Plaza  
Chelsea Raymer,  
Hair Society,  
Costa Mesa  
Lee Ann Kline,  
STEM Advantage  
Angela Du

**“Educate to Elevate”**

- **Be the best that you can be, through education**
- **Empower yourself and expand your possibilities**
- **“Knowledge is Power” – Francis Bacon**



# TIARA

MAGAZINE

SHERRIE  
GEARHEART  
MS. ILLINOIS  
AMERICA 2018

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DESIGNER 2017

2017  
NEW YEAR  
FASHION  
SHOW  
COVERAGE

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# AN INTERVIEW

with **Sherrie Gearheart**  
**Ms. Illinois America 2018**

**Q. Why did you decide to compete in the Ms. America competition?**

This has been my dream pageant for years. I love what the system represents: women ages 26 and older that are making a difference in their community. I love that this pageant allows women to compete from all areas of life from married, single, widowed, or divorced and with or without children.

**Q. What is your platform and why did you choose it?**

I started a non profit organization 7 years ago after losing my childhood friend to suicide. Since that time I have traveled across the USA and world educating millions of individuals on the signs of depression and how to save a life through suicide intervention training. I have orchestrated countless awareness events as Ms. Illinois America 2018 and have successfully saved lives. I hold over 15 certifications in suicide prevention. I continue to pursue my education as it is my lifelong mission to help those that feel hopeless. No one should ever suffer depression alone and no one should have to suffer the loss of a loved one to suicide. Suicide is the most preventable cause of death. I work tirelessly to ensure education and resources are reaching the public through news interviews, speaking engagements, and awareness events. I hope to continue this legacy as Ms. America 2018 because this title will bring so much joy and excitement to the impoverished cities and countries I visit as founder and president of Live Out Loud Charity.

*Read the full interview in the next issue of Tiara Magazine.*



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# Tina Brandon Abbatangelo

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with Dr. Tabby, Animal Dentist Extraordinaire



Dr. Tina Brandon Abbatangelo

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NEVADA  
AMERICA  
2018**

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*Until one has loved an  
animal, a part of one's  
soul remains unawakened.  
- Anatole France*






# Kimberly JONES

**Care for the Caregiver - Survive And Thrive!**

**Thank You** for allowing me to be your voice and for the opportunity to spread this message of awareness and hope for **Traumatic Brain Injury survivors** and their caregivers.

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**CARE**  
FOR THE CAREGIVER  
SURVIVE AND  
THRIVE!

**KIMBERLY**  
MS. SONORAN DESERT 2018 **JONES**

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MS  
SOUTH  
CAROLINA  
AMERICA  
2018



*Cheryl*  
MCDERMOTT



**Thank You**

to all who have supported me  
on this amazing journey, it is a great  
honor to represent the Carolina's.



# CHERRY

## MCDERMOTT

**MS. SOUTH CAROLINA  
AMERICA 2018**

**PLATFORM:**

**"We Are All Special"**

Empowering those  
with special needs  
and individuals who  
are bullied to be  
their best.

### Thank You

to my amazing family, my  
niece Raven (my makeup  
artist) Sandi, Heather  
(So Glam Photography)  
and my dog Doodle for  
your endless love,  
support and  
encouragement.  
I love you more  
than words can say.



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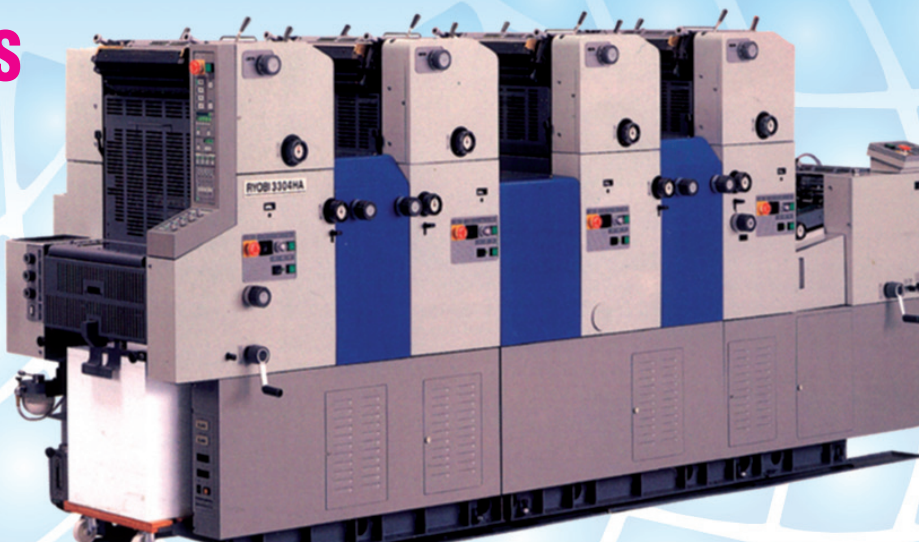
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October 14, 2016

**MS. AMERICA  
SUSAN JESKE**  
AT HER HOME IN COTO DE CAZA



Photo by: Daniel Pham

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# FIRST MS. AMERICA WHO BECAME PAGEANT'S CEO HAS DRESSED UP COMPETITION INTO AN INSTITUTION

By Christopher Randall

Photos by Daniel Pham and Ken Herczeg

Although she no longer carries the title of Ms. America, Jeske --- at 54, still a blue-eyed, raven-haired beauty with a sparkly personality --- was the first Ms. America when she won the title in 1997 in Las Vegas.

And ever since 1999, when Jeske purchased the pageant and became its chief executive officer, she has grown the Ms. America Pageant into an institution that attracts high-achieving women from all walks of life to vie for the title and put it to philanthropic use.

"I like being in a position where I'm able to help people," Jeske says of the Ms. America Pageant, which she views as a way to empower women who are 26 years of age and up single, divorced, married and widowed across the nation. They all have a cause or platform they believe in and with their State title, she sends them out into the world to do good using their crown.

Jeske's greatest thrill from the Ms. America Pageant is when the emails, text messages and Facebook postings start flowing in from her titleholders describing the excitement they felt when they were able to accomplish something for their cause or platform that they never dreamed they could accomplish - such as speaking in front of State Legislatures or U.S. Congress Members to promote changing laws, being invited to high profile events such as the Oscars, appearing in parades and even meeting the President of the United States.

In recent years, Jeske, whose pageant titles, philanthropic work and record-setting singing prowess (more on that in a moment) have produced enough newspaper and magazines clippings to fill several thick binders, has been keeping a relatively low profile.

"I've been putting my queens ahead of me," she explains. "Ms. America and the State queens should be in the spotlight. I want to give them the opportunity to shine."

At the recent Ms. America Pageant at the Curtis Theatre in Brea, Oksana Vovk, an attorney, bested 42 other contestants to win the 2017 Ms. America title before a sold-out crowd of 200 and over 9000 people viewing LIVE streaming on AlertTheGlobe.com including Oksana's family in the Ukraine.

The pageant has come a long way since Jeske purchased it and was able, in 2000, to secure a registered federal trademark from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in Washington, D.C.

In the early years, there were as few as five contestants who competed around the pool area of the condominium complex where Jeske lived.

Jeske came to California from her hometown of Littleton, Colorado in 1984 with \$500 in her pocket and facing monthly rent of \$400. She

worked whatever jobs she could to make things work as she pursued her dream to win pageants and help others around the world --- a passion that began in high school when a friend suggested she enter a local beauty competition.

Since then, Susan's has held various positions, including being the first spokesperson for Hyundai Motor America and other Fortune 500 companies. She was hired to launch a natural and organic skin care line for Nikken Corporation called "True Elements", created a gift basket company for the holidays, and was in the top 2% of Mary Kay Cosmetic distributors. She was also on many soap operas such as Days of our Lives, Young and the Restless, Santa Barbara, and the Bold and the Beautiful playing a reoccurring part of a neighbor, secretary or nurse.

Now with the growth of the Ms. America Pageant, she's taking on the CEO role full time. The Ms. America Pageant, as Jeske is fond of saying, has "taken on a life of its own." The competition pays for itself. Whatever monies that is brought in is used to produce the show, pay for the prizes and awards for the contestants. "I noticed when I had a title, people would take me seriously," Jeske says. "It would open doors to volunteering."

Jeske's title of Ms. America took her all over the world meeting important people such as Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, U.S. Presidents and many famous celebrities. During her reign, her platform was "Students Against Violence" and she created an assembly program she presented in schools across the country. For this she received more than 30 awards, 17 Keys to the City, and Proclamations for her presentation. In 2004, Jeske received the Lifetime Achievement Award from President W. Bush for her contributions to charity and volunteerism.

Oh, and about that singing.

In 1992, Jeske made the "Guinness World Records" for singing the National Anthem at the most events (17) in a 24-hour



2017 Ms. America International Nova Kopp, 2017 Ms. America Oksana Vovk, CEO Susan Jeske, and Ms. America International 2017 went to Tracy Lynn Rodgers.

period, raising \$93,000 for children charities. In the span of a day, she traveled 373 miles by limousine, eight miles by helicopter, three miles by a boat and a motorcycle to get through crowds and be on time to the events scheduled throughout Orange and Los Angeles Counties. That achievement launched a singing career that led to Jeske performing at more than 1,500 events before audiences that included seven U.S. Presidents and numerous heads of state.

But Jeske's tune these days is

different as her focus is on further growing the Ms. America Pageant and inspiring women and helping them to open doors they never conceived of being opened before and accomplish greater charitable work than they had previously thought possible.

"I want them to use their title to go out and help people, like I did," she says. "It really does work. And when you give to other people, it also gives back to you."

For more information, visit [www.msamericapageant.com](http://www.msamericapageant.com).



Ms America contestants class of 2016



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# JOLYN FARBER

***Mental Health Awareness and Support is such an important topic in today's climate.*** It is actually very common to suffer from a mental illness and also very common not to receive the support and treatment that you need. This topic touches so many lives, including the lives of people whom I love. It is my hope that a few of these statistic and suggested ways you can help resonate with you as they have with me and encourage you to help end the stigma by talking about mental health disorders and supporting those dealing with these challenges.

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS & SUPPORT

• ***Serious mental illness costs America \$193.2 billion*** in lost earnings per year.

• ***Mental Illness may become the 2nd leading cause of disability*** throughout the world by 2020.

### ***What is Mental Illness?***

Mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling or mood and may affect someone's ability to relate to others and function each day. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis.

### DID YOU **KNOW?**

- **1 in 5 Adults have a mental health condition.** That's over 43 million Americans; more than the populations of New York and Florida combined.
- **Youth mental health is worsening.** Rates of youth with severe depression increased from 5.9% in 2012 to 8.2% in 2015.
- **Over 56% of Americans still do not receive treatment or lack access to mental health care.**

### ***The Good News***

Recovery, including meaningful roles in social life, school and work, is possible, especially when you start treatment early and play a strong role in your own recovery process.

## ***WHAT YOU CAN DO:***

### • **Listen.**

- **Lead others to erase stigma and bias** in your workplace, social and family networks.
- **Improve personal support** for people you know and **encourage others** to do the same.
- **Support increased professional support and funding** for those with Mental Health Disorders.
- **Speak about your own experiences** to encourage others.
- And, most importantly, if you have a mental health need, **ask someone for help.**



# Carlie Gintoli

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