



AMBASSADOR THERIOT DELIVERS REMARKS AT 7TH ANNUAL 25 INFLUENTIAL WOMEN LEADERS AWARD

By [U.S. MISSION GUYANA](#)

14 MAY, 2026

— AMBASSADOR THERIOT DELIVERS REMARKS AT 7TH ANNUAL 25 INFLUENTIAL WOMEN LEADERS AWARD



Ambassador Theriot with this years 25 IWLA Honorees, Co-Founders and members of the diplomatic corps

Remarks as prepared
Ambassador Nicole D. Theriot
7th Annual 25 Influential Women Leaders Award
May 9, 2026

Ms. Lyndell Danzie-Black & Ms. Michelle Nicholas, co-creators of the 25 Influential Women Leaders Award; members of the diplomatic corps; distinguished honorees; members of the private sector and civil society; members of the media, distinguished guests — good evening!

It is a privilege to be here with you as we celebrate the work of incredible Guyanese women whose leadership drives meaningful progress across Guyana...and beyond.

I want to congratulate Michelle and Lyndell on seven years of providing this important platform. Your dedication has inspired a movement, and I'm particularly proud that many of the 175 women recognized as Influential Women Leaders over the past seven years are alumni of U.S. Embassy programs—a testament to the lasting impact of our partnership.

The US State Department has reaffirmed that our foreign policy must make the United States—and our partners—safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Women's leadership is central to achieving every one of these goals.

The evidence is clear: When women lead, communities thrive. When women succeed, they lift entire generations. When women are empowered, they create lasting change.

Last month, I attended a pioneering literacy program led by four female Youth Ambassadors – one of our most popular exchange programs. These young women identified a need at Mon Repos Primary, mobilized the Ministry of Education, and made a positive impact on the lives of 20 students, as well as their teachers and parents. Through the U.S. Embassy's Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund, Youth Ambassador Briana Gopie leads Project Wellness Within, traveling across Guyana to empower students through interactive sessions on mental health and social wellness.

Like so many of our exchange alumni and the women in this room – what these young women have in common is that they didn't wait for permission or instructions – they identified needs, mobilized resources, and delivered results to strengthen their communities. That is the kind of initiative and vision we celebrate tonight. I'm especially proud that one of tonight's honorees, Jacqueline Johnson, is a Youth Ambassador who beautifully exemplifies this spirit of leadership and service.

When women are empowered to participate in civic and economic life, their communities, families, and countries are more prosperous, healthier, and safer. The Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative or YLAI program supports local businesses and builds the skills needed to compete in the 21st century economy. Over half of our YLAI alumni are women entrepreneurs thriving in Guyana's booming economy.

Alumni include trailblazers like Abbigale Loncke Watson, who founded We Lead Caribbean to support women entrepreneurs across Guyana, and Filisha Duke, who now serves as the President of Women in Energy – opening doors for women in one of Guyana's most critical and traditionally male-dominated sectors.

The Embassy's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement team also strives to advance women's meaningful participation in the security realm. Dr. Nicola Kendall, Senior Superintendent and Head of the Strategic Implementation Unit for Police Reform at the GPF, is currently learning cutting-edge approaches to police reform in the US. We sent Magistrate Shivani Lalaram and Supreme Court Registrar Sueanna Lovell to attend the RISE conference – the world's premier training event on addiction, mental health, and justice innovation. This paved the way for the establishment of Guyana's first Mental Health Court in 2025. 31 out of 33 DPP prosecutors trained by INL between 2020 and 2026 were women.

Women in law enforcement and the judiciary bring critically important perspectives to the justice system. Their leadership makes our communities safer and our institutions more responsive to all citizens.

The examples I've shared tonight – from literacy programs to police reform to entrepreneurship – show what's possible when we invest in women's leadership. Nations are more stable, prosperous, and secure when women have the opportunity to lead, innovate, and contribute.

To tonight's honorees: You represent the very best of Guyana. Your courage to lead in challenging times; your commitment to lifting others as you climb; your vision for a better future – this is what transforms nations.

Through your incredible work, you are building a better Guyana and strengthening the bonds between our nations. You are creating opportunities for the next generation of women leaders who are watching, learning, and preparing to follow in your footsteps.

Congratulations to all of tonight's Influential Women Leaders. The United States is proud to stand with you, to support your work, and to learn from your example.

Thank you so much!

[Cookie Settings](#)