



Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence  
**ACTIONALLIANCE**

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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December 14, 2015

### **Coalition Honors Leaders Who Advocate for Survivors of Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence**

Richmond, VA – On December 11, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (Action Alliance), Virginia's leading voice on sexual and intimate partner violence, honored three leaders who have done extraordinary work to advocate for the needs of survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence: Claire Dunn—a victim advocate from Alexandria with a 30-year history in the work, and Annie Forrest and Claire Wyatt, both recent graduates of the University of Virginia.

**Claire Dunn** has dedicated 30 years to advocacy at the local, state and national levels to promote safety for all and the prevention of future violence. Ms. Dunn was an active leader in Virginia's early efforts to implement national models of community coordinated response, and in outreach to underserved communities addressing both domestic violence and sexual violence, particularly in reaching LGBTQ communities. She advocated for the passage and continuation of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), sharing the stage with then-Vice President Al Gore, Attorney General Janet Reno, and Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala to speak to the impact and importance of VAWA. As a Board member, leader and President of the Action Alliance, Ms. Dunn brought curiosity and generosity of spirit to those roles. As an active leader in Action Alliance public policy efforts, she remained firmly connected to the needs of survivors in her community and guided by those needs. Ms. Dunn retired from the Alexandria Office on Women in 2015.

**Annie Forrest** and **Claire Wyatt**, both recent graduates of the University of Virginia, advocated tirelessly on behalf of college students to demand that the Virginia General Assembly carefully consider the impact of their actions as it crafted new legislation in 2015 to address campus sexual violence. Their personal testimonies as survivors helped temper and improve a myriad of well-meaning, yet disempowering and potentially harmful campus sexual assault "mandatory reporting" bills that lacked a trauma-informed approach to sexual violence.

**Annie Forrest** graduated from the University of Virginia in 2015 with degrees in psychology and women, gender, & sexuality. She is currently serving as a leadership consultant for Sigma Kappa Sorority where she travels across the country, providing support and leadership development to Sigma Kappa collegiate women. Ms. Forrest joined the National Panhellenic Conference's Campus Safety and Sexual Assault Task Force to continue advocating for survivors and working to end sorority support of the Safe Campus Act.

**Claire Wyatt** is a Dallas, TX native and a 2013 UVA graduate, where she studied Global Development Studies. She was a leader in the UVA Living Wage Campaign—a grassroots campaign working with campus workers for better pay, benefits, and working conditions. Upon graduating from UVA, she co-founded the Virginia Student Power Network, a statewide coalition of young people organizing for greater state funding for higher education in the Commonwealth and for lower tuition and student debt on their campuses. Ms. Wyatt now works full-time as New Virginia Majority's statewide campus organizer, organizing the Student Power Network, which is now on seven public university campuses statewide and has trained hundreds of students in pushing for grassroots change towards more accessible, affordable, democratic, and diverse higher education in Virginia.

Ms. Dunn, Ms. Forrest, and Ms. Wyatt were honored at the Action Alliance's annual "Act. Honor. Hope." Membership Celebration event in Richmond.

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#### **About the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance**

The Action Alliance has been Virginia's leading voice on sexual and domestic violence for more than 30 years and enhances response and prevention efforts through training, public policy advocacy, public awareness programs, and technical assistance to professionals.

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