



# WINGSWORLDQUEST

*Inspiring and supporting daring women in exploration since 2003*



WOMEN OF  
DISCOVERY

Media Kit  Spring 2018

205 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor | New York, NY 10017 | 917-763-9914 | [www.wingsworldquest.org](http://www.wingsworldquest.org)



## FACT SHEET

- ⊗ WINGS WorldQuest™ was founded in 2003 by author and explorer Milbry Polk and American travel writer Leila Hadley Luce.
- ⊗ The registered nonprofit organization provides unrestricted funding to women explorers to support their bold initiatives in global scientific discovery in both research and field studies.
- ⊗ To date, WINGS WorldQuest has awarded over \$550,000 to 79 women with the funds needed to pursue their unique scientific endeavors around the globe.
- ⊗ Each awarded explorer becomes a WINGS Fellow, which has created a close network and a platform for these women to foster support, inspiration and even collaboration in new endeavors.
- ⊗ The organization is composed of 79 fellows, 11 board members, two staff, and many volunteers.
- ⊗ Yael Jekogian is the nonprofit organization's current Managing Director, taking on the role in 2015.
- ⊗ Funding is provided by individual donors, foundations, and events such as the Annual Women of Discovery Gala.
- ⊗ The organization's programming includes seminars/webinars, workshops, fundraising, and special events such as youth outreach programs to inspire the next generation of explorers.

### *Who are these remarkable women? A small sampling...*

**Helen Thayer** ★ First woman to solo unsupplied to any of the world's poles when she skied to the magnetic North Pole ★ First woman to walk across the Sahara and Gobi Deserts ★ Camped 1 year beside an Arctic Circle wolf den to study wolves in the wild ★ Founded Adventure Classroom, using her expeditions as metaphors to teach and inspire students ★

**Dr. Sylvia Earle** ★ Marine scientist leading the world's ocean conservation effort ★ Founded Mission Blue to affect public action and policy by leading expeditions, creating documentaries, and convening world leaders in ocean conservation ★

**Ann Bancroft** ★ First woman to cross the ice to both poles ★ Led first team of American women across Greenland ★ Led first women's team to the South Pole ★ First woman, along with WINGS Fellow **Liv Arnesen**, to cross Antarctica ★

**Anna Cummins** ★ Completed the first global survey of plastics pollution in the world's oceans, across the Pacific, Atlantic & Indian Ocean ★ Founded 5 Gyers to lead aquatic plastics pollution research globally and eliminate plastics from our oceans ★

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**For media inquiries, contact Rachel Honig • [rhonig@amplifycooperative.com](mailto:rhonig@amplifycooperative.com) • 646-322-1242**



## BACKGROUND

Founded in 2003 by author and explorer Milbry Polk and American travel writer Leila Hadley Luce, WINGS WorldQuest™ set out to recognize and support daring, independent women working in science and exploration. The organization's success is driven by three core components: providing grants, promoting education, and inspiring others. It is still today the only organization of its kind, awarding unrestricted funding to female explorers in their extraordinary quests around the globe, with in many cases, these funds being the sole reason for expedition success.

The registered nonprofit organization is currently composed of 79 fellows, 11 members of the board, and countless volunteers. To date, WINGS has supported over one hundred women in their unique endeavors and provided over \$550,000 dollars to their field research and explorations on all seven continents, oceans around the world, and outer space. The support WINGS provides knows no boundaries—the organization recognizes and supports women of all races, nationalities, ages, and cultures who are actively engaged in field work focused on investigating questions about the nature of our world, have demonstrated the ability to think outside the box and follow an uncommon path, show promise for contributing to important future advances in sciences and humanities, and share a commitment to contributing to WINGS' education and outreach mission. These women advance WINGS' mission to inspire the next generation of intrepid explorers and global problem-solvers through various outreach programs.

In its 15 years of operation, WINGS WorldQuest™ has developed a closely-knit, worldwide network of female explorers and, in so doing, has created a platform for these women to support each other in their work, and has become a catalyst for collaboration on new projects. The organization holds a variety of events throughout the year ranging from educational seminars/webinars and youth outreach programs to fundraising galas and recognition ceremonies, while the individual Fellows in the WINGS community have presented TED talks, published books and journals, starred in award-winning documentaries, and most importantly, contributed groundbreaking research to their respective scientific and humanitarian fields.

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## LEADERSHIP PERSONNEL

### Yael Heller Jekogian, Managing Director



Yael is a hands-on advocate and leader in the women's rights movement, has over 20 years of experience in nonprofit management, and is an accomplished environmental engineer.

She has designed municipal and hazardous waste landfills, and implemented remedies for soil and groundwater contamination at Superfund and brownfield sites. Yael has served as a Board Member, Director of Development, consultant and volunteer for many nonprofits including Women's Campaign Fund, Women's Way, New York Women's Foundation, and Transport Group Theatre Company.

She has a MS and BS in Civil Engineering from Drexel University, lives in New York City, and enjoys exploring the world with her husband and two daughters who are making their own discoveries along the way. Yael joined the WINGS WorldQuest leadership team in 2015.

### Beth Nixon, Board Chair



Beth Nixon runs a photography business in Greenwich, CT, where she serves on a number of local boards. She previously worked as a producer/field producer for such news media as MainStreet Media and the MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour in Chicago and Looking East and One World in New York. She also has worked in Tokyo, Hong Kong, China, Greece, France and Australia. With her husband and two college-age daughters, she has hiked and rafted 22 US National Parks and a numerous National Monuments. She holds a BA from Princeton University, an MA from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, and a Certificate in Language and Literature from Peking University (PKU).