

Mary Brennan Karl formerly of Daytona Beach was a strong, innovative and accomplished woman who overcame the existing male oriented cultural barriers of her day. Beginning with a small public vocational program, she broadened the range of subjects taught and otherwise dramatically expanded the school. As WWII intensified, she provided around the clock training for thousands of citizens to work in the defense industries throughout the country. As victory for the Allies became apparent, the institution transitioned into a training center for our returning military personnel. The enormous growth was made possible through her efforts along with the help of the local newspaper and civic and political leaders that she recruited. Ultimately, their collective hard work and her interaction with former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, which was arranged by Mary McLeod Bethune, culminated in the Federal Government's conveyance to Volusia County of a large tract of land with some fifty-five buildings, including classrooms, dormitories, Olympic swimming pool, library and cafeteria.

Because of her tireless and successful leadership, the unique institution was named the Mary Karl Vocational School. Students flocked to the school to take advantage of the wide variety of educational opportunities offered on the beautiful campus. As she led the effort to acquire the site, her long range plan was to establish a community college or a branch campus for the University of Florida. Mrs. Karl was not to see her plan executed in her lifetime, but traveling on the momentum that she had generated, a community college was authorized and merged with the vocational school. Since that time, she has been regularly honored as the founder of the college, and the Mary Karl Library and Resource Center became an important part of the campus. Subsequently, the Daytona Beach Community College was converted to the Daytona State College, continuing the Mary Karl tradition of providing quality education on the very site that she had envisioned as a major educational institution.

Anna Rodriguez of Bonita Springs is considered by many to be an indomitable force in the global fight against human trafficking. A native of Puerto Rico, she immigrated to Miami in late 1974. She is the founder and Executive Director of the Florida Coalition against Human Trafficking, an organization whose mission is to eradicate human trafficking locally, nationally, and internationally. Ms. Rodriguez works tirelessly to raise the consciousness of communities and professionals throughout Florida in an effort to inspire others to join the fight to combat human trafficking. She also serves as an international liaison between the U.S. Department of State and has been asked to meet with and provide valuable information to visitors from Uzbekistan, India, United Arab, Germany, Russia, Italy, UK, Haiti and other countries.

Ms. Rodriguez also serves as a trainer for the Organization of American States and has conducted trainings in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean since 2006. On July 16, 2004, Ms. Rodriguez was publicly recognized by President George W. Bush for her dedication to rescue human trafficking victims. U.S. Congressman Mario Diaz Balart presented Ms. Rodriguez with an American flag flown from the U.S. Capitol in recognition of her efforts. She was also recognized by Congresswoman Stella Marie Cordoba on behalf of the Congress of Argentina for her support and assistance in the creation of Argentina's human trafficking law. Ms. Rodriguez's passion continues to inspire others to become bridge builders uniting to rescue victims of human trafficking, the "invisible slaves of the 21st century."