

## **2018 Inductee Biographies**

**Adela Hernandez Gonzmart**, (1920 - 2001), “The Queen of Ybor City”, served as the gracious and elegant figurehead and supreme hostess of the world-famous Columbia Restaurant in Ybor City until her death in 2001 at 81. Adela was also a tireless advocate for the arts, the community and her heritage. During her lifetime and even after her death, Adela inspired generations of women whose horizons were expanded through her examples of balancing family and business. Adela has many legacies, but one of the more notable is co-founding the Latino Scholarship Fund at the University of South Florida, which assists academically excellent but financially challenged students. She served on the organizational board and was instrumental in forming the Tampa Symphony Orchestra, forerunner of today’s Florida Orchestra. She organized the Ballet Folklorico of Ybor City, and was involved with groups such as Community Concerts, The Tampa Ballet Sociedad Teatral de Tampa and the Ybor City Museum. She also served three consecutive terms as the President of the Ybor City Chamber of Commerce. The national magazine Vista celebrated her as one of 13 Hispanic women in the United States recognized for accomplishments and community service. With her success, she defied expectations, tradition and culture.

**Lee Bird Leavengood** of Tampa was born in Monticello, FL in 1928. While attending the Florida State College for Women in 1947, she was one of a small group who were offered a scholarship to help gender-integrate the University of Florida, which was going co-ed for the first time. During her time at the University of Florida she led the charge to create a safe place for fellow women in the new environment by colonizing one of the University of Florida’s first Greek letter organizations for women, the Beta Pi Chapter of Kappa Delta Sorority, which flourishes on the campus to this day. After following her newspaper executive husband to Tampa in 1959, she became actively involved at the University of South Florida as an officer in the President’s Leadership Cabinet, a pioneering female USF Foundation Board member, an active volunteer, and ultimately as a much beloved and long-tenured (35 years) program builder and administrator. With a professional career that spans nearly three decades at USF, Lee Leavengood ultimately spearheaded the creation of the USF Division of Senior Programs and initiated and coordinated three major senior programs in the greater Tampa Bay area: USF SeniorNet Learning Center, USF Learning in Retirement Institute, and the Tuition Waiver Program for Senior Citizens. Upon her retirement from USF, she took her expertise to the fledgling Tampa Bay History Center, where she was the Founding Director of Adult Learning and has served in the education department since 2005. Lee Leavengood was appointed to the first Governor’s Commission of the Status of Women established in 1964 and served as vice chairman on this commission under three governors.

**Janet E. Petro** of Indian Harbour Beach began her professional career as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army after graduating in 1981 from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., with a Bachelor of Science in engineering. She served in the U.S. Army’s aviation branch with various assignments in Germany. She also holds a Master of Science in Business Administration from Boston University’s Metropolitan

College. Currently, as a member of the Senior Executive Service, Ms. Petro is the Deputy Director of NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center (KSC) in Florida. Appointed to this position in April 2007, she shares responsibility with the Director in managing the KSC team of approximately 9,000 civil service and contractor employees. Ms. Petro consistently pioneers and implements novel business approaches that reduce barriers to collaboration and innovation. She provides executive leadership as well as short-term and long-term vision for the Center while overseeing the Nation's premier commercial and Government launch complex. Since the successful retirement of the Space Shuttle Program in 2011, she increased her far-reaching and lasting impact on NASA's legacy by again helping to establish KSC's future in the American space program and transforming KSC from a Government-centered launch facility into the Nation's premier multiuser spaceport. Ms. Petro ensured Agency and Center Partnership Boards were established, personally leading the KSC Board to explore, develop, implement, and sustain processes and other initiatives to use existing NASA capabilities, workforce, and facilities with commercial partners. Ms. Petro's ability to establish and sustain KSC as the world's preeminent multiuser launch complex directly supports Florida and the nation's leadership in the space community.