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Simmons Alumna and Women's Leadership Advocate Barbara Lee Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award at 50th College Reunion

BOSTON (June 5, 2017) – Simmons College alumna and national women's political advancement leader Barbara Lee was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award recently at the college's annual reunion weekend. Lee, who graduated from Simmons in 1967, was recognized at her 50th reunion for her contributions to women's empowerment as the founder and head of the Barbara Lee Family Foundation and her support of women who want to run for public office.

"Barbara Lee's life's work is the embodiment of Simmons' mission," said Simmons College President Helen Drinan. "She has dedicated herself to the development and growth of future women leaders in the United States and has tirelessly supported women's advancement and success in the public realm. Locally, Barbara Lee's generosity, guidance, and advocacy make it possible for Simmons students to get practical real-world experience in state government and politics from esteemed female public officials in Massachusetts."

"My experience at Simmons reshaped my view of the world. It showed me that women can be extraordinary leaders," Lee said. "Twenty years ago, I found myself in a position to empower women beyond my community. I decided to focus on women's political leadership—and build a pipeline to the presidency."

In 1998, Lee founded the Barbara Lee Family Foundation to advance women's equality and representation in American politics. The Foundation produces nonpartisan, pragmatic research for women candidates that has been shared with thousands of women nationwide. Through the Foundation, she endowed the Barbara Lee Family Foundation Internship Fellowship Program at Simmons. Since its inception in 2004, more than 100 Simmons juniors and seniors have participated in the program, which includes an eight credit internship, a stipend, and a placement with a female state legislator. Students learn the inner workings of Massachusetts government and politics through hands-on experience. Lee also founded the Simmons Institute for Leadership and Change in 1991, and has built strong relationships with community organizations that are also committed to developing and advancing women and girls from all cultural and economic backgrounds.

A champion of women in the arts, Lee serves as the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of Contemporary Art. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Simmons and a Master's Degree from the Boston University School of Social Work, as well as a 2001 honorary degree from Simmons.

Lee was honored during Simmons' annual reunion weekend, which was held from June 2 to June 4. The event was attended by hundreds of alumnae/I who visited Simmons' Boston campus to reunite and reconnect with friends and classmates. The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented at the Alumnae/I Awards Ceremony and Farewell Brunch.

Simmons College (www.simmons.edu) is a nationally recognized private university located in the heart of Boston, and is the preeminent authority on women's leadership. Founded in 1899, Simmons is the only undergraduate women's college in Boston, and maintains a history of visionary thinking and a focus on social responsibility. The college offers world-class coeducational graduate programs in nursing and health sciences, including physical therapy and nutrition; liberal arts; education; behavior analysis; library and information science; management; and social work. Follow Simmons on Twitter at [@SimmonsCollege](https://twitter.com/SimmonsCollege) and [@SimmonsNews](https://twitter.com/SimmonsNews).