Circle of Friends 2025 Awardees

Judge Deidre Monroe – Circle of Vision Award - Honoring transformative changemakers in racial and gender equity. This award is given to a visionary who challenges the status quo through bold ideas and inclusive leadership. Their work reflects the YWCA's mission to eliminate racism and empower women—uniting people, policy, and purpose to build a more just and equitable future.

Shelice Tolbert, Attorney - Women who Lead Award - Recognizing extraordinary leadership in business and community impact. Presented to a woman whose professional success and community commitment uplift those around her. She leads with purpose, mentors with heart, and creates pathways for women and families to thrive—embodying strength, resilience, and impact.

Denise Dillard – Safe Futures Award - Celebrating commitment to survivor-centered care and healing. This award honors an individual or organization making a profound difference in the lives of survivors. Through advocacy, direct service, or innovation, they champion safe futures and ensure that no one has to walk their healing journey alone.

Susan Watkins -YWCA NWI Longevity Award - Honoring Unwavering Commitment and Years of Service. This award is presented to a YWCA team member whose enduring service reflects a deep-rooted belief in our mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and create safe spaces for every person we serve. Through their continued presence, steady leadership, and quiet resilience, they have been the thread that holds together moments of progress, challenge, and transformation. Their longevity is more than time—it's a legacy of impact.

Chelsea Whittington- **The Earline S. Rogers Trailblazer Award**

Honoring a legacy of fearless leadership and public service. Named after the trailblazing State Representative Earline Smith Rogers, this award is presented to a leader whose advocacy and vision have transformed systems and empowered communities. Their work exemplifies courage, compassion, and a lifelong commitment to advancing equity, safety, and dignity for all.