

WOMEN TO WATCH

Clear Focus

name: Eleanor M. Josaitis

who she is: As executive director and co-founder of Focus: HOPE, Josaitis oversees a \$62.5 million budget, 754 colleagues and 49,000 volunteers.

what it does: Focus: HOPE provides food for at-risk mothers, children and low-income elderly; an on-site child-care center; and education and technological training.

how she got there: Josaitis founded Focus: HOPE in March of 1968 in response to the Detroit race riots, armed with a dream; a partner, Father William Cunningham; and a mission statement that reads, in part, "This metropolitan civil and human rights organization pledges intelligent and practical action to overcome racism, poverty and injustice." When Cunningham died in 1997, Josaitis took over.

family: Married 42 years, five children and seven grandchildren

education: Holds a high school diploma from Detroit's St. Teresa's and four honorary degrees



pivotal moment: "In '62, I was watching a TV program on the Nuremberg trials that was interrupted by the civil rights march in Selma, Alabama. Police were giving electric shocks with cattle prods to control the crowd. I asked myself, 'What would I have done if I lived in Germany during the war? And what am I doing about what's going on now in my own country?' "

influences: Martin Luther King, Ghandi, Eleanor Roosevelt and Margaret Mead

on juggling motherhood and career: "When I'd come home at night, I'd slam my hand on the brick outside my house, a reminder to leave the day's challenges there."

greatest accomplishment: "To know I'm part of the solution. General Colin Powell hugged me last week at the regional Chamber of Commerce conference, congratulating me on my Woman of Conscience Award. Our work is becoming known internationally."

on her faith: "It drives me, sustained through prayer and a grateful heart."

her advice: "Follow your passion. Be professional and tenacious. Senator Phil Hart taught me about tenacity. In fighting for legislation for our food program at a senate hearing, the secretary of agriculture said no to me. Rather than just being angry, Hart said I had to outsmart them. So I borrowed a plane from Ford and flew the legislative directors in. It worked."

on success: "There are so many people of goodwill waiting to be invited to do something. That's the key to Focus: HOPE's success -- we ask."

by Cindy Frenkel Kanter

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