



# National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

## **Diversity in Technology Leadership Award**



This year's Diversity in Technology Leadership Award goes to an individual who has provided groundbreaking leadership in the US technology field and, while successful, ensured that girls and women coming behind her have every opportunity to overcome traditional gender biases and enter into and excel within the high wage, high skill, high tech career areas that served her so well. As a Texas Instruments Fellow, Ms. Wanda Gass' commitment to outstanding performance and innovative product development is markedly recognized by her colleagues and management teams.

While her ability to innovate is awe-inspiring within the digital industry, Ms. Gass' peers most admire her pledge to create equity in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through volunteerism, community outreach and partnering, fundraising, and through the donation of significant personal funding to achieve progress.

Ms. Gass is one of the founders of High-Tech High Heels, a program developed to advance equity education for teachers in secondary science and mathematics, better prepare career counselors to speak knowledgeably about STEM career opportunities for females, and support girls' interest and preparation in STEM career fields. To this end, Ms. Gass has diligently worked to provide high quality, rigorous, two week physics summer camps for sixty high school girls annually in high need school districts. Today, more than 700 girls have attended the physics summer camps, 420 school counselors have participated in career workshops, and 57 teachers have completed Gender Equity training. Where the programs are fully implemented, six times the number of Hispanics and four times the number of African Americans are passing the AP Physics exam. In addition, the female AP pass rate has increased by an estimated 28%, rising from 12% to more than 40% in a little over a decade.

Ms. Gass has also mentored high school students interested in engineering by sponsoring their senior projects. She is an active volunteer at The Hockaday School where she trains students on robotics applications. Ms. Gass also established and endowed an engineering scholarship at her undergraduate alma matter Rice University. As a young student with a passion for engineering, Wanda Gass became the only high school female to join the Explorer's Club, an after-school group specifically created for boys to encourage their interest in engineering. She may not have realized it at the time, but when Ms. Gass became an Explorer, it was her first step to ensuring everyone has a place in STEM.