

Above & Beyond – Honoring Women in Government and Public Service



Hilary Danailova, *CITY & STATE*

When Keyna Cory began her lobbying career nearly four decades ago, “female lobbyists were few and far between,” she recalls, and she was often shut out of important meetings.

Cory, now president of Tallahassee-based Public Affairs Consultants, was determined to change that. She mentors younger women and even installed a nursery in the office so her vice president – a former intern – could bring young children to work. “I’m proud that things have changed,” Cory says.

While studying political science at the University of Florida, she volunteered on a successful legislative campaign and became hooked on advocacy. The longtime chief lobbyist for Associated Industries of Florida, Cory currently chairs the Florida Society of Association Executives, having grown its annual fundraising event revenue to \$75,000 from \$3,000. She

also leads the Florida Recycling Partnership Foundation and the Florida Goodwill Association.

Cory, who serves as board secretary of the Florida Sports Hall of Fame, has a passion for football dating back to her high school marching band days. She was the first woman to chair a post-season college game – the Carquest Bowl – which raised eyebrows back in 1995. “When I asked to be on the team selection committee,” she recalls with a chuckle, “they said, ‘Keyna, women don’t do that. Wouldn’t you like to be on hospitality instead?’”

Today, Cory enthuses about Jennifer Canady being in line to be the state’s first female House speaker. “I’m just so excited that women are finally getting their time in the Capitol,” Cory says.

– H.D.