



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Women From Across the State Gather for the Second Annual Conference of Alabama Chapter of Women Leading Government

Pelham, AL... Gretchen DiFante, City Manager in Pelham, Alabama and ACCMA Board Member, was joined by a slate of Alabama local government executives as the state chapter of Women Leading Government (WLG) held its Second Annual Conference on Tuesday, February 25, 2020, at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena. Over 100 women, representing more than 18 municipalities and counties from across the state, gathered to network and take advantage of educational opportunities offered at the conference.



Chapter organizer, Gretchen DiFante, opened the conference with a letter from Governor Kay Ivey. Last year, Mrs. DiFante met with the Governor to share the good news about the formation of the state chapter. Governor Ivey stated in her letter, *“The power of women working together has long been a catalyst for change in our society and world. Over the past 200 years our state has stood at the forefront and has proudly produced many trailblazing women.”*

This year’s conference theme, “What Does It Mean to Lead?” follows WLG’s mission of encouraging women to pursue careers in local government through networking and education and help prepare women for success in the unique communities across our state.

The conference keynote speaker, Elizabeth “Liz” Huntley, is an accomplished litigation attorney, and dedicated child advocate, author and lecturer. She practices law at Lightfoot, Franklin & White, LLC in Birmingham, Alabama. She is the recipient of many professional honors and awards, including membership in The National Black Lawyers—Top 100 organization and was selected by Super Lawyers as a 2018 Mid-South Super Lawyer. Mrs. Huntley spoke to the women in attendance about perseverance, leadership and overcoming challenges in a variety of situations.

After a very moving and inspiring presentation, the attendees had the opportunity to meet with Mrs. Huntley to purchase an autographed book of her story [More Than a Bird](#).





Dr. LaKami Baker, PHD, Interim Executive Director of the Government & Economic Development Institute, Dr. Eliza M. Belle, MS, PHD, CFE, *“The Village Psychologist”* and Kim Kiel, Athletic Director, Pelham City Schools, joined Huntley and DiFante as conference speakers. Breakout session topics covered servant leadership, having difficult conversations, work/life balance and using strengths as women to lead.

At the conclusion of the breakout sessions, the speakers were joined by Mrs. Yvonne Murray, 58 Inc., for a Q & A panel discussion. The discussion was moderated by Mrs. Beth Cheeks, City Manager, Talladega, and touched on several topics faced by women in the workplace. The panel discussion also provided an opportunity for speakers and attendees to discuss topics in a more personal way.

Alabama became the twelfth state to welcome a Women Leading Government Chapter. WLG is a partner organization to the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) whose 12,000 members seek to share a commitment to local government excellence and dedication to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Alabama WLG is a partner organization to The Alabama City/County Management Association (ACCMA) who also served as a conference sponsor.

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