

# Inspiration Finalists

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## Margot Swann

### Visions Anew Institute

In 1992, Margot Swann became a statistic. Her marriage of 22 years, during which her only job was tending children and family, became one of the nearly 1 million marriages headed for divorce.

Facing an attorney husband who she said was extremely knowledgeable about legal and financial issues, Swann felt the odds were insurmountable. Rather than toss the problem to her own attorney and hope for the best, she decided to utilize resources around her.

"I used the team approach in my divorce," she said. "I had financial help, psychological help, as well as the strong support of family and friends."

She leveraged this support system into a respectable settlement, got her life back on track and now maintains an amicable relationship with her former husband.

The story could have ended there. But the experience opened her eyes to the number of women struggling through the same issues. Swann was determined to share information she gleaned during those dark times.

In 1998, she formed Visions Anew Institute, a 501(c)3 nonprofit resource center for divorce information and recovery.

"My mission is to connect women with the resources that are available to help them," she said. "We're not divorce advocates. We help them empower themselves and also connect with each other for support."

The center has helped more than 400 women, typically referred by attorneys, psychologists or other professionals, and former participants.

Education and support are the primary goals. Several of the organization's support groups meet in the metro Atlanta area. The Web site has an extensive database listing divorce-related services, all recommended by previous program participants or other professionals. There's no charge for the support groups or database information.

Swann is proudest of the weekend retreats held three times a year. Dubbed the "Divorce Survival School," it's a weekend of sessions covering all areas of pre- and post-divorce issues.

Speakers include attorneys, CPAs, career coaches and psychologists.

"These are all highly-regarded professionals who have also experienced divorce," she said. "They bring not only their expertise, but heart."