

PAULA DOCKERY

After a successful 16 years in the Florida legislature, Paula Dockery is now a popular syndicated columnist. Her weekly political insights appear in a growing number of Florida newspapers. Her blunt, honest and informed columns stand out in the crowded field of political commentary. She's earned a reputation as one of Florida's leading public truth-tellers, unafraid to challenge powerful people or lazy conventional wisdom.

Dockery's first foray into political commentary was writing a weekly column for Florida Voices, an online editorial page, chronicling her final year in the Florida Senate. When her term ended in November 2012, she continued writing at the request of many of the papers that were publishing her "inside the legislature" look at politics and political players.

Dockery's approach to writing echoes her distinguished legislative career. Elected to the Florida Senate in 2002, Dockery served 10 years and held numerous leadership positions including two stints as Senate Majority Whip, Chair of the Law Enforcement Council; the Environmental Protection Committee; the Criminal Justice Committee and the Home Defense and Seaport Security Committee. Dockery was first elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1996 as the first Republican to serve that district. In her six years in the House she served as House Majority Whip, Chair of the Environmental Protection Committee and Chair of the General Government Appropriations Committee.

Her proudest legislative accomplishments involve her efforts on environmental, criminal justice and transportation issues. She was the author and primary sponsor of the Florida Forever Act, the popular bipartisan land acquisition program for the preservation and conservation of environmentally sensitive lands. Dockery was the first Florida legislator to be nationally recognized by [Governing Magazine](#). She was named their public official of the year for the creation of the Water Sustainability and Protection Act which brought diverse interests together in a bipartisan effort to preserve the vital water resources of the state. Recognizing her expertise and stature on rail and seaport issues, Dockery was selected as the Vice Chair of the National Conference of State Legislatures' Committee on Transportation.

During her final few years in the legislature, Dockery was widely regarded for her effective bipartisan efforts to defeat bad or misguided legislation. Earlier in her legislative career she was recognized for working to form consensus to pass sound, commonsense policy. Because of her ability to understand complex issues, negotiate among disparate interests and successfully shepherd legislation to passage, she has been honored with over 85 awards of appreciation from a wide spectrum of groups and associations.

Prior to running for office, she worked in financial services in various lines of insurance: auto, workers compensation and reinsurance.

A Gator Alumna, she graduated from the University of Florida with a B.A. degree in Political Science and an M.A. degree in Mass Communications. She taught Editing and Graphics as a graduate teaching assistant, wrote news copy for an FM station, and bartended to put herself through college. Her Masters thesis examined the question of who sets the agenda in political campaigns.

Paula was born in Queens, New York and grew up in South Florida graduating from Coral Springs High School in 1979. Her first job at age 16 was a cashier at a Publix Supermarket.

Dockery has been active in her community serving on many boards and not-for-profit organizations. She is a proud member of Kiwanis. She attends both St Joseph's Catholic Church where she is a member as well as First United Methodist Church with her husband C.C. "Doc" Dockery.

The Dockery's were married in 1989 and live in Lakeland Florida. They can also be found chilling at their home in the mountains of North Carolina and working on their farm in central Florida.

• Honors & Awards

2012 Proclamation "Senator Paula Dockery Day" October 1, 2012 – City of Lakeland, Florida

2012 William "Doc" Myers Lifetime County Advocate Award – The Florida Association of Counties

2012 State Conservation Legislator of the Year Award – The Florida Wildlife Federation

2012 Legislative Career Achievement Award – The Florida Justice Association

2012 Legislator of the Year Award – The Florida Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

2012 Outstanding Student Advocate Award – University of South Florida Student Government

2011 Friend of Education Award – FEA – Florida Education Association

2011 Champion of Judicial Independence – The Florida Bar – Trial Lawyers Section

2011 Florida Bar Legislative Award – The Florida Bar

2011 Legislative Leadership Award – The Florida Association of Counties

2010 Legislator of the Year – The Florida Association of Counties

2010 Pete Weitzel Friend of the first Amendment Award – The First Amendment Foundation

2010 Outstanding Support of Florida Libraries – The Florida Library Association

2010 Friend of the Free Enterprise – The Association of Builders and Contractors

2009 Exceptional Board Leadership & Service Award – The Boys & Girls Club of Lakeland & Mulberry

2009 County Champion Award – The Florida Association of Counties

2009 Orlando's 50 Most Powerful People – (4th Most Powerful) – Orlando Magazine

2009 Honor Roll – Alternatives to Incarceration Council

2009 Appreciation of Service Award – Daughters of Italy Lodge

2009 Hero Award – LowerTaxesNow.org

2009 Leadership Appreciation Award – Polk County Republican Executive Committee

2008 Theodore Roosevelt Award – The Audubon of Florida

2008 Legislative Conservation Award – Coastal Conservation Association Florida

2008 Champion of the Trail Award – The Florida Trail Association

2007 Legislative Award – American Cancer Society – Florida Division

2007 Legislative Appreciation Award – The Florida League of Cities

2007 President's Award of Leadership – The Florida Senate

2007 Legislative Conservation Award – Coastal Conservation Association of Florida

2007 Honor Roll – The Florida Chamber of Commerce

2007 Blazing Star Award – Green Horizon Land Trust, Inc.

2005 FAC County Champions – Florida Association of Counties
2005 “A” Honor Roll – Florida Chamber of Commerce
2005 Green Elephant Award – Florida Chapter of REP America
2005 Award of Appreciation – Florida Ocean Alliance
2005 Friend of Free Enterprise – Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.
2004 Conservation Legislator of the Year – The Florida Wildlife Federation
2004 Senator of the Year Award – Florida Dental Hygiene Association
2004 Tugboat Award – Florida Ports Council
2004 Legislative Award – American Cancer Society
2004 Outstanding Leadership to Protect the Water Resources of South Florida – South Florida Water Management District
2004 Legislator of the Year, Senate – Florida Trucking Association
2004 “A” Honor Roll – Florida Chamber of Commerce
2004 Certificate of Recognition – Florida Chapter Sierra Club
2003 Certificate of Appreciation – Hardee County Board of County Commissioners
2003 Commitment to Florida’s Children – The Ounce of Preservation Fund
2002 County Champion Award – Florida Association of Counties
2002 “A” Honor Roll – Florida Chamber of Commerce
2002 Leadership Award – The Nature Conservancy
2002 FLERA Leadership Award – Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies, Inc.
2001 Legislative Leadership Award – Trust for Public Lands
2001 Community Hero – Central Florida Health Care
2001 Top 40 Legislators – Florida Chamber of Commerce
2001 Legislator of The Year – Audubon of Florida
2001 Conservation Leadership Award – Audubon of Florida
2001 Legislative Conservation Award – The Coastal Conservation Association of Florida
2001 County Champion Award – Florida Association of Counties
2001 House Ranking 5th-10th – Most Powerful Legislators – Miami Herald – Ranked 5th
2000 Forever Florida Leadership Award – The Nature Conservancy
2000 Outstanding Legislator Award – Florida Parks & Recreation Association
2000 Legislator of the Year – Florida Farm Bureau
2000 Legislator of the Year – Florida Cattlemen’s Association
2000 Legislator of the Year – Florida Forestry Association
2000 Paula Dockery Trail Dedication – Lake Wales Ridge State Forest
2000 Outstanding Legislator Award – Save Our Lakes, Inc. of Central Florida
2000 Top 40 Legislators – Florida Chamber of Commerce
2000 Politician of the Year – Florida State Massage Therapy Association
2000 Outstanding Legislator of the Year – The Midwives Association of Florida
2000 Outstanding Legislator Award – Florida Recreation and Park Association
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1999 Legislator of the Year – Florida League of Cities
1999 Public Service Award – Nature Conservancy Florida Chapter
1999 Teddy Award – The Theodore Roosevelt Society
1999 Legislator of the Year – Florida Parks and Recreation Association

1999 Plant Management Award – Florida Aquatic Plant Management Society
1999 John Cummins Legislative Award – American Advertising Federation
1999 Paul Revere Award – Printing Association of Florida
1999 Outstanding Legislator – Florida Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association
1999 Top 40 Legislators – Florida Chamber of Commerce
1998 Program for Emerging Political Leaders Selectee – University of Virginia, Darden Graduate School of Business Administration
1998 Fall on the Sword Award – 4th District American Advertising Federation, Inc.
1998 Guardian of Small Business – National Federation of Independent Business
1998 Top 40 Legislators – Florida Chamber of Commerce
1998 100% Voting Record for Business – Associated Industries of Florida
1997 Legislator of the Year – The Midwives Association of Florida
1997 Friend of the Family – Christian Coalition of Florida

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