Britt Conroy shines as national veteran

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

The university is shining on the national stage thanks to one of its very own Owls.

Britt Conroy, the university's coordinator of Veteran, Military and Adult Learning Support, has achieved national recognition by earning the title of 2025 National Veteran of the year for the Air Force after recently being honored as Connecticut's Veteran of the Year for Higher Education.

"I feel a lot of pride, and I'm really excited to win that for Southern," Conroy said. "I think that's a cool thing to be able to say for the university."

For Conroy, the award serves as a badge of honor not only for her service but for the community that uplifts her.

She credits her colleague, Lisa Galvin, the associate dean of graduate enrollment management, for nominating her and believes the recognition reflects the supportive culture at the university.

"The reason that I was able to be nominated for these awards is because of the work that I do here," Conroy said. "I think that just kind of speaks to the way that we all support each other here at Southern — like my colleague put me up for this award."

That same sense of support was used to help her win, as Conroy said she received many of her votes through support from her wife, faculty and students.

Through social media posts, her supporters helped spread the word about her nominations and rallied votes for her.

"A lot of the Southern community helped get it out and get me a lot of votes. I just really feel a lot of love from Southern, for sure," Conroy said.



PHOTOS | BRIANNA WALLEN

Britt Conroy, the coordinator of Veteran, Military and Adult Learning Support in her office in Engleman Hall on Friday, Oct. 31.

Conroy said her unwavering commitment to serving others is what continues to guide her to dedicate her time to supporting those who have marched similar paths.

"When you're transitioning out of the military, it can be hard, and so I'm glad that I'm able to be there to help out however I can, and just allow our veterans to make the most of their benefits, get through their education and go on to the next thing that they've got," Conroy said.

Conroy explained that the community she serves is diverse, including veterans, active and reserve members and their families.

Conroy's dedication to service extends well beyond the university's campus.

She remains active in veteran organizations and community projects across New Haven, as she serves as a member on the Mayor's Veterans Affairs Committee and is the chaplain for the New Haven American Legion Post.

Through those organizations, Conroy helps coordinate annual events such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies, along with cleanup efforts at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park in Long Wharf, New Haven.

Conroy's commitment to helping veterans is deeply rooted in her own experience in uniform.

"I was active duty for just shy of seven years," Conroy said. "It was like six years, 10 months and a couple of days. I was a diagnostic imaging technologist, so I did X-ray and CT scans, and those were my two primary duties."

During her active duty from 2003 to 2010, Conroy also took on additional responsibilities, including instructor, supply and equipment custodian and physical training leader.

Most of her service took place at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, now known as Joint Base Andrews, where Conroy enjoyed the opportunity to explore the Washington, D.C. area and gain valuable experiences.

Reflecting on her years in uniform, Conroy said her time in the Air Force continues to shape who she is today.

"It's something I'm still very proud of," Conroy said. "It's a big part of my life. Obviously, I still serve our veteran and military-connected students."

Conroy said that her serive is an undeniable part of her identity.

"I think it's always apart of you," Conroy said.

She emphasized that her military experience inspired her to keep learning about veteran affairs services and other resources to better support the students she works with.

"I'm proud of it. I'm happy that I had the ability to serve," Conroy said. "The friendships that I made and the things that I learned, it's just part of who I am."

As Veterans Day approaches, Conroy said students and falculty can expect a lineup of events to celebrate those who have served.



The 2025 Veteran of the Year medal hanging in Conroy's office.

Women's leadership is showcased at EmpowerHer!

By Valentina Toro
Contributor

Women in the fields of business, education and entrepreneurship were celebrated at the university's School of Business and Women in Leadership Academy EmpowerHer! celebration on Oct. 28.

This year's honorees included Heather LaTorra of Marrakech, Inc.; Dina Natalino of New Haven Public Schools; Vee Adusei of VASE Management LLC; Jessica Sager and Janna Wagner of All Our Kin, Inc.; and Alisa Bowens-Mercado of Rhythm Brewing Co. Each was recognized for demonstrating resilience, leadership and dedication to their fields.

"It's humbling, and it's an honor to be awarded here as an honoree because it lets us know that women's compassion and mission is still impactful," Bowens-Mercado said.

Held in the School of Business the event brought together students, faculty and local business leaders to honor women whose leadership continues to inspire change across their communities and industries.

The celebration featured a fireside chat with Sen. Christine Cohen, who spoke about the importance of women's voices in leadership and business. Cohen shared insight from her work as both a legislator and small business owner, emphasizing the need for women to advocate for themselves and others.

Assistant Director of the Women in Leadership Academy Lisa Marotta said that EmpowerHer! reflects a broader goal to celebrate women's accomplishments while also acknowledging the challenges they face.

"When women rise, we all rise. That is our message here today," Marotta said. "It's important to break down barriers. It's important that we recognize that there are so many women who are making a difference."

Finance major Jennifer Borucki, a senior and the student president of the Women in Leadership Academy, said the event served as a reminder of how local leaders can inspire students to pursue ambitious goals.

"We want to recognize local women who exemplify leadership," Borucki said. "Some of these women are working in fields that aren't necessarily what you would consider traditional."

Borucki said that by hearing from women in STEM fields, they will receive a sense of empowerment and motivation to follow a similar non-traditional path.

"Seeing these women being recognized for the hard work they put in really promotes a sense of just inspiration," Borucki said.

Dean of the School of Business Jess Boronico echoed that message, noting how inclusivity and representation are central to the school's mission.

"The School of Business believes in recognizing people from all backgrounds and creating an inclusive community," Boronico said. "Seeing women achieve this progressively is inspirational because we strive to see all underrepresented groups achieve that type of recognition."

The celebration served not only as recognition of outstanding leadership but also as a call to action for continued progress. Looking ahead, organizers said they plan to expand programming that supports women in leadership roles.

"We do professional enrichment throughout the year, all sorts of community service," Marotta said. "In the spring, our signature event, will be called Game Changers, and will highlight women who are in the business of sports."



PHOTOS | VALENTINS TORO

Jess Boronico, the dean of the School of Business, speaking at the EmpowerHer! event on Oct. 28 in the School of Business.



Lisa Marotta, the assistant director of the Women in Leadership Academy, and finance major Jennifer Borucki, a senior and the student president of the Women in Leadership Academy, in front of the event.



Alisa Bowens-Mercado, the founder and owner of the first Black-woman owned brewery in Connecticut, Rhythm Brewing Co., at the event as one of the honorees.