



Deborah Szekely was born in Brooklyn on May 3, 1922, and grew up in New York, Tahiti, and Marin County, California. Her multi-faceted career includes:

The modern health and fitness movement—Deborah is affectionately known as the "Founding Mother" of the contemporary mind/body/spirit fitness movement, having co-founded Rancho La Puerta in Tecate, Baja California Norte, Mexico, with her husband Edmond Szekely in 1940. In 1958, working on her own, she founded the Golden Door in Escondido, California. She has been appointed to several presidential fitness councils starting in 1970, and is a founding board member of the International Spa Association.

Government—From 1984 to 1991 she worked as a U.S. Diplomat in Washington, D.C., serving as President of the Inter-American Foundation, an independent agency of the U.S. government created by Congress in 1969 to support grassroots development throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. A noteworthy byproduct of her unsuccessful 1982 run for Congress was her creation of the book "Setting Course: A Congressional Management Guide" in 1984, now in its 15th edition for the 115th Congress. "I saw the need for a bipartisan management guide to setting up and managing a congressional office," she said. "There was simply no shared information to help incoming representatives."

Philanthropy and public service—Deborah has served on innumerable boards and funded many projects relating to children's education, health and welfare, and the environment—on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. In the last 30 years her public service includes founding Eureka Communities, New Americans Museum, and WellnessWarrior.org. In 2012 she was awarded the "Order of the Aztec Eagle"—Mexico's highest honor bestowed on an individual who is not a Mexican citizen.