

2000
Virginia
McKnight
Binger
Awards in

Human Service

THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

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About The McKnight Foundation

The McKnight Foundation is a charitable foundation that seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations.

The Foundation supports efforts to improve outcomes for children, families, and communities; contributes to the arts; encourages preservation of the natural environment; and promotes scientific research in selected fields.

The Foundation's primary geographic focus in its human services and arts grantmaking is the state of Minnesota.

Founded in 1953 and endowed by William L. and Maude L. McKnight, the Foundation has assets of approximately \$2 billion and expects to make grants totaling \$95 million in 2000. Mr. McKnight was one of the early leaders of the 3M Company. The Foundation, however, has no connection with 3M.

Virginia McKnight Binger
Awards in Human Service

The Awards in Human Service are an annual tradition at The McKnight Foundation, reflecting the Foundation's deep belief in the virtue and power of compassion. Since 1985, 166 Minnesotans have received these awards for selflessly giving time and effort to others with no thought of material reward for themselves. Each recipient exemplifies the life-changing difference one person can make through service.

The Foundation created the Awards in Human Service in 1985. In their 10th year, they were renamed as a tribute to Virginia McKnight Binger, the Foundation's honorary chair and past president, whose personal compassion sets the standard for the Foundation's work. Last year, an evaluation of the program's first 15 years found that award recipients continue to be important contributors to their communities.

Those who receive these awards are not motivated by a desire for recognition. Someone familiar with their work nominates them in confidence, and the nominations are researched and evaluated independently. To qualify, nominees must live in Minnesota and show commitment to helping others achieve a better quality of life while receiving little or no pay or recognition for their efforts. Recipients each receive \$7,500.

The Foundation invites nominations each spring through the media and charitable organizations. Beginning in August, a committee of people active in various human services fields across the state evaluates the nominations and recommends 10 nominees to the Foundation's Board of Directors.

The following pages describe the award recipients for 2000 and their work. Names of previous recipients are listed on page 24.

To receive a nomination form or more information about the program, contact The McKnight Foundation at 612/333-4200. Next year's nomination form will be available on the Foundation's website, www.mcknight.org, in May 2001.

Program

2000 Virginia McKnight Binger Awards in Human Service Recipients

Jean Andrews
Melvin Carter, Jr.
Sylvia Carty
Richard Endres
John and Julie Funari
Hazel Jacobson
Raleigh Kent
George Nelsen
Delroy Schoenleben
Manuel Zuniga

2000 Virginia McKnight Binger Awards in Human Service

Earle Brown Heritage Center
Brooklyn Center, Minnesota

November 16, 2000
2:30 p.m.

Welcome

Rip Rapson
President, The McKnight Foundation

Pat Schwartz

*Chair
Virginia McKnight Binger
Awards in Human Service Committee*

Presentation of Awards

Erika L. Binger
Director, The McKnight Foundation

Rip Rapson

2000 Virginia McKnight Binger Awards in Human Service Committee

Melvin Giles, *St. Paul*
Marge Hamersly, *Glenville*
Lyle H. Iron Moccasin, *Minneapolis*
Vicki Itzkowitz, *St. Paul*
Jaime Longoria, *Minneapolis*
Pat Schwartz, *Belle Plaine*
Somly Sitthisay, *Oakdale*

Gifts of Self

Virginia M. Binger
Honorary Chair, The McKnight Foundation

Fifteen years ago we gave our first Awards in Human Service to 10 Minnesotans who could be counted on to help when others needed them. Fifteen years is a long time for any program, and so, as we do periodically, we asked ourselves whether the awards were still serving their original purpose—to recognize and encourage exceptional, unstinting service.

An independent evaluator contacted former award recipients, nominators, and committee members. She found that the awards hold great meaning for those who receive them and that often the recipients go on to serve their communities with greater determination than before.

The report and our own soul-searching led the Board of Directors of The McKnight Foundation to renew its commitment to the Awards in Human Service. Like our commitment to Minnesota, these awards give us continuity of purpose. They reflect the values behind all of our grantmaking—our belief in the individual as the bedrock on which family, community, and philanthropy stand.

Three kinds of giving are essential to effective philanthropy. The most common is the gift of money; another is the gift of time; and the third is the gift of compassion and human warmth. The recipients of our Awards in Human Service stand apart because of the power of their compassion. They may also give money, and they certainly give time, but it is in giving the unique gift of themselves that they make their greatest contribution and impact.

Not surprisingly, this year's honorees share much in common with the first group in 1985 and every group since. All these individuals (including some couples and pairs who have shared an award) are united in making Minnesota a better place to live. They mentor people young and old, give food and clothing to those in need, work to conquer racism and other forms of injustice, and much more.

To this year's honorees, thank you for your selfless gifts. Thank you for keeping the spirit of philanthropy alive.



Jean Andrews

Falcon Heights

At the Center for Victims of Torture in Minneapolis, asylum seekers and refugees who have suffered from politically motivated torture come to heal. Jean Andrews touches the lives of many of them. Since 1994 she has devoted 20 to 25 hours a week coordinating the efforts of volunteers who provide direct services requested by staff and arranging in-service programs for this group of volunteers. Her insight and empathy are critical in matching volunteer “befrienders” with individual clients. Relationships with volunteers are often a vital part of the healing process.

Jean has always used her organizational abilities to help others realize their potential. A retired associate professor in the University of Minnesota master’s degree program in nursing and a curriculum specialist, she has had leadership roles in consortium development and multidisciplinary programs. She has served on the Social Justice Committee at St. Cecilia’s Church and has led support groups for women at Chrysalis. Through volunteering, she says, “I feel I’m making good use of any experiences I’ve been privileged to have.”

*Her compassion, devotion,
and love for human beings make
Jean an outstanding advocate
for people who have suffered
some of the worst cruelty known
to humankind.*

—Beth Wickum

Melvin Carter, Jr.

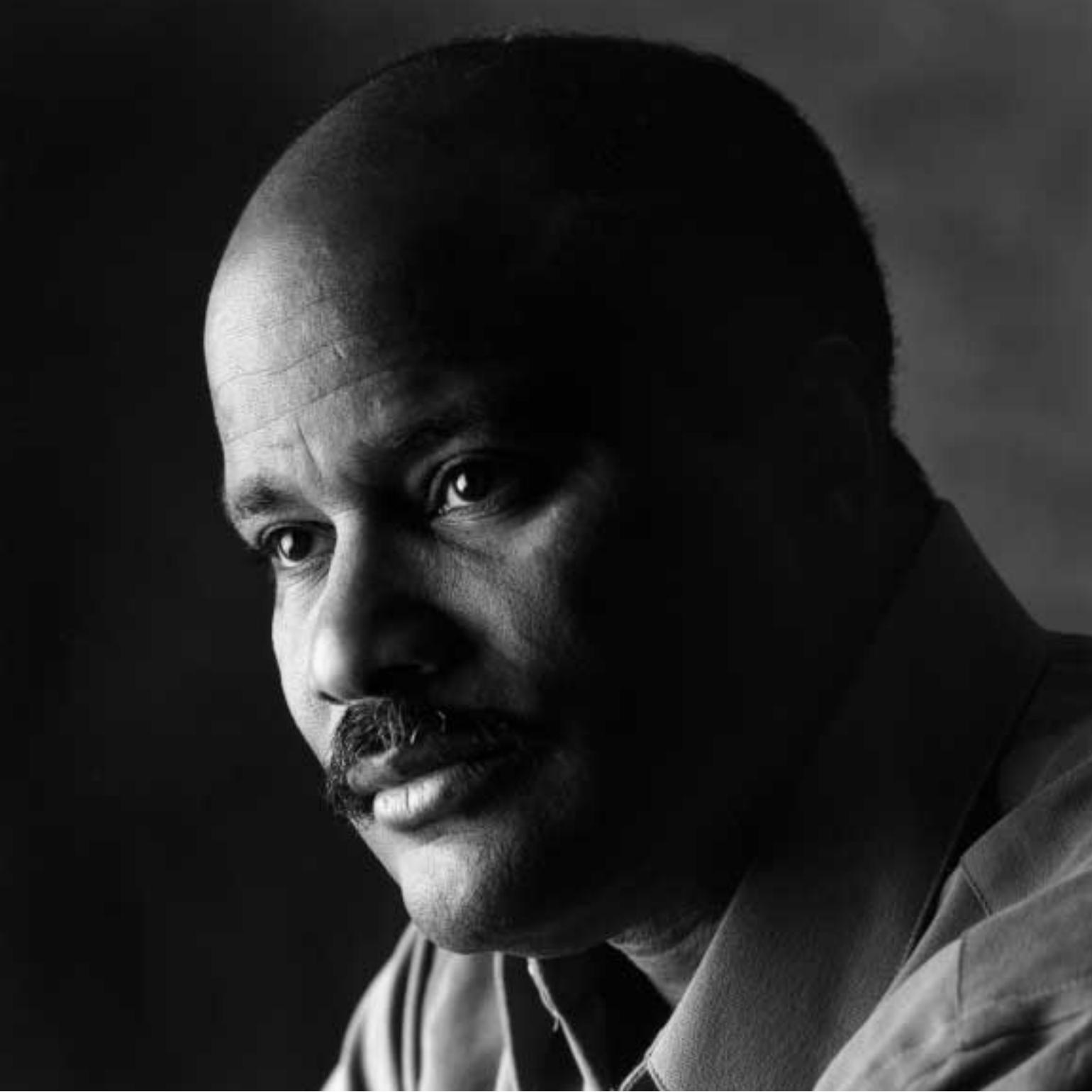
St. Paul

As a police sergeant working with juveniles in St. Paul, Melvin Carter grew concerned about the numbers of young African American males involved in violent crimes. He remembered the caring adults who had surrounded him as a youth. “I saw so many avoidable mistakes kids were making,” he says. “Instead of having access to the kind of men who helped raise me, these kids had access to drug dealers and gangbangers.” To combat those negative influences, he rallied other men to found Save Our Sons.

SOS members take kids on outings, serve as role models, and even respond to calls from desperate parents to talk to their boys face-to-face. “We try to jump start the thought process, to tell [the boys] what life should be—accomplishing a mission rather than a tragic waste of life,” Melvin says. Many referrals come from Ramsey County’s juvenile correctional facility, Totem Town. SOS gives the boys a sense of pride and connection with their community, while giving the community responsible citizens. Melvin’s knowledge of the justice system combines with his compassion for children in other ways, too: He works to reconcile the African American and Hmong communities and to improve the mental health of children in the juvenile justice system.

Melvin Carter’s most honorable qualities are his firm and unwavering commitment to reconciliation within races, ages, genders, and families; his vision for the well-being of children; and his vision for our common and collective well-being.

—Kathy Jefferson



Sylvia Carty

St. Paul

The Summit University neighborhood has enjoyed Sylvia Carty's conscientious, compassionate presence for more than 40 years. She is a friend to children, families, and seniors, especially those who are often overlooked. As a board member of the Summit University Block Nurse Program, she helps arrange services that enable seniors to remain in their homes independently. As a classroom assistant at Crossroads Elementary School, she helps children discover their potential. As a volunteer intake worker at Family Service, she helps people in need sort through their situation and get assistance without embarrassment. Whether giving her time to the Episcopal Church Home, Resources for Child Caring, or St. Philip's Garden Housing Project, she is thorough, practical, and supportive.

A native of New York, Sylvia moved to St. Paul with her husband, an Episcopal clergyman, in 1950. With three small children, she began volunteering at Hallie Q. Brown Community Center with "The 4 O'Clock Hour," an after-school program. When the nursery school program at Hallie Q. Brown expanded to all-day childcare, she became a teacher. She was appointed director of the program in 1964 and served for 25 years.

"When I retired, a young friend said, 'Now, you're not going to sit around!'" Sylvia recalls with one of her frequent, hearty laughs. Not a chance.

Sylvia Carty is the embodiment of William Shakespeare's gentle rain from heaven that blesses the giver and the receiver.

—Soyini Guyton





Richard Endres

Brainerd

They come from all over the Midwest and beyond to Confidence Learning Center, a year-round camp near Brainerd for people with developmental disabilities. They return home full of excitement about their experiences and with a newfound sense of self. Dick Endres founded the center as a volunteer, eventually directed it full-time, and, now retired, is a volunteer again.

Dick is a pioneer in recreational therapy, a practice almost unknown when he began working in mental health in the 1950s. He was employed by the state hospital in Faribault when he had the chance

to join the therapeutic recreation team—one of Minnesota’s first. Though many at the time said “these people” with developmental disabilities could not ski, cook, or canoe, Dick thought differently. Experience proved him right. “If you say they can’t, they can’t,” he says. “We do things to help them build confidence in themselves.” Moving to Brainerd, he founded the country’s first year-round camp for developmentally disabled people in 1967. Some 4,000 people, ages 6 months to 87 years, attend the privately funded camp each year. Dick’s passion has rallied tremendous community support, keeping fees for campers to just \$8 a day.

Dick is a natural teacher and a patient man. He has a deep commitment to encouraging self-sufficiency, and he prefers to keep in the background.

—J.S. Endres

John and Julie Funari

South St. Paul

Nothing sounds simpler than giving away food, but it is an ongoing challenge to secure high-quality donations, organize them, and get them to the right people. That is what John Funari does. Volunteering with Neighbors, Inc., in South St. Paul, John, 81, works 30 to 40 hours a week for the food shelf, while Julie, 79, spends four hours a week sorting, displaying, and selling donated clothing to raise money for the organization. They have kept at it for years—26 years for Julie, 17 for John. John was instrumental in setting up a complex food inventory and distribution system. He picks up donations at local grocery stores seven days a week and puts his skills as a retired salesman to work lobbying distributors for free or discounted goods. He also serves as a handyman for Neighbors.

The Funaris' compassion takes many other forms as well, but they are private people who would rather not talk about it. Much of what they do—including helping people through hard times—goes on behind the scenes. “We just enjoy doing it,” Julie says. Harv Bartz, executive director of Neighbors, says their dependable deeds exemplify faith in action. “Theirs is a true servant leadership,” he says. “They serve because they want to.”

One of the beauties of John and Julie is their utter simplicity. They're “just plain folks” who don't do anything for recognition.

—Harv Bartz





Hazel Jacobson

Minneapolis

At 87, Hazel Jacobson finally sold her north Minneapolis house, but she didn't leave the neighborhood where she has lived since 1946. Her new condo is just a few blocks away. A longtime champion of diversity, Hazel has worked through her church, St. Olaf Lutheran, to welcome people of color as they moved into the North Side. She started a Saturday craft program to reach out to neighborhood children. Through her role as Sunday school superintendent and other positions of responsibility, Hazel helped change attitudes within the church to make it more inclusive. "I wanted to make it a friendlier place for everybody," she says.

Relatives and friends ask why she stays in the city. "I tell them a story or two about things that have happened that make me feel it's a very friendly place," she says. Like the next-door neighbor who quietly shoveled her walk. The many children she has befriended. The shut-ins who brighten at her visits. She continues to volunteer at the church as she has for 50 years. "As long as I can contribute something, I will," she says.

She is an inspirational symbol for the revitalization of St. Olaf as a community church with a diverse worshiping population.

—Dale Hulme

Raleigh Kent

St. Louis Park

No job is too small or too big for Raleigh Kent.

Whether changing diapers, rocking a distressed child, scrubbing messy highchairs, or tending to routine committee matters, she serves wherever she is needed. She has volunteered for nine years at the Minneapolis Crisis Nursery and been a foster parent for 26 years, caring for teenagers and children with chronic illnesses. Her fierce commitment to each child's well-being conveys to them a sense of his or her individual worth. One foster son returned to her care in his 40s as he was dying of AIDS. "He came back to be part of the family," she says. "I was glad he felt he could come back."

Widowed at age 35, Raleigh coped with her own sorrow by trying to understand and disentangle the emotions surrounding death. She volunteers with the Twin Cities Jewish Healing Program, helping people who have no affiliation with a synagogue face grief. She also coordinates the Twin Cities women's Chevra Kadisha, the group responsible for the ritual of preparing deceased Jewish women for burial. Whether nurturing children or consoling those at the end of life, she seeks to make her life a blessing to others.

When and where others often recoil, lack patience, or simply do not have the strength of heart, Raleigh has focused her considerable energies and her timeless love. Under her guidance each child gets a glimpse of himself as someone worthy of respect and with a future to fulfill.

—Judy Marcus





George Nelsen

Minneapolis

They call him Mr. Housing. For more than 30 years, George Nelsen has sought to preserve and build housing on Minneapolis's North Side and help people find a decent, affordable place to live. First, he helped found Willard Homewood Organization, which became Neighborhood Housing Services, where he is a longtime board member. Although George downplays his influence—"I was a worker bee," he says—his persistence often cut through bureaucracy to get results. He challenged a federal housing policy of tearing down older but strong housing stock, leaving empty blocks. His vision has been to build "infill" housing that fits the character and aesthetic of the old neighborhoods and to save existing homes with loans, grants, technical assistance, and home counseling programs. Now, when someone has a housing problem, George is the man to call. "Buying a home can be daunting," he says. "A lot of people don't want to live in the suburbs. They want to live in an integrated community, and they like old houses. I say, 'Let's talk.'"

Over the years George has mentored young people, advocated for seniors, and served with a community-police relations group. He retired from a career in public relations and transportation and still volunteers full-time despite having Parkinson's disease. In addition to his housing work, George volunteers for the cause of diversity with the Inter-Race Institute in Minneapolis.

George has labored many years for a multicultural vision of housing in an age of gentrification.

—Francine Chakolis

Delroy Schoenleben

Waite Park

For 35 years, Delroy Schoenleben has been bringing music, stories, and cheer to residents of Talahi Care Center, a nursing home in St. Cloud. He might come bearing flowers from his garden or small gifts for residents' rooms, along with his guitar and his accompanist and wife of 51 years, Caroline. He has a personal word for everyone and a message of hope that springs from his spiritual convictions. "I just wanted to do something for the Lord," he says.

Two days a week, he takes his comforting presence to another institution, the Stearns County Jail, where he has volunteered for 40 years. He leads religious services and counsels inmates one-on-one.

Authorities at the jail call him "a treasure" who not only attends faithfully but is always on call to help someone through a crisis. "It's wonderful to see people turn their lives over to the Lord, better themselves, change their way of living, and be happy," Delroy says. A stroke two years ago scarcely slowed him down. Before retiring, Delroy worked for a granite company and a box company. But his real calling has always been his ministry of love to people who are lonely or troubled.

He takes the time with each person to brighten their lives and make them feel they are important and loved.

—Ivy Heggstad





Manuel Zuniga

Moorhead

Manuel Zuniga knows what it is like to feel invisible. Until recently, members of the Red River Valley's Hispanic community were seen mainly in the fields, where most first came to work. Then many decided to settle there permanently. Often they felt unwelcome, and their children suffered especially. Manuel was part of a small group who worked hard to establish a cultural home for Hispanic newcomers. In 1994, Centro Cultural de Fargo/Moorhead was born. Here, among other things, marriages and anniversaries are celebrated, the Hispanic culture is promoted, low-income workers train for better jobs, and young people get help with school and self-esteem.

Manuel, a native of Mexico who became a U.S. citizen in 1998, serves on the board of Centro Cultural and works with volunteers there. As a community organizer, he has helped organize migrant farm workers around pesticide and wage issues. He served on the board of the People Escaping Poverty Project and volunteers with Communities Working to Dismantle Racism. As a mentor in the after-school program, he pays special attention to Hispanic students, whose dropout rate is high. Sometimes these efforts work, sometimes they don't and new ways must be tried. "It takes a lot of commitment, work, respect, love, and patience," he says. Still, the Hispanic community has come far. "It was my dream to have the center," he says. "Now we have it."

He has addressed issues of oppression, marginalization, economic disadvantage, and systemic injustices. He has enabled people to be more self-assured and determined in all aspects of daily living.

—Ricardo Avila

Previous Recipients

Virginia McKnight Binger Awards in Human Service

1999

Henry Bruns
Ernesto DelVillar, Sr.
Marcelle Diedrich
Darlene Edwards
Denise Gubrud and
Margarita Reese
Phoenix Hill
Geraldine Hull
Ardis Knutson
Yako Myers
Joyce Segelbaum

1998

Christine Barich
Dawn Glaser-Falk
Joe Huber
Michael Kirk
Kevin L. Perez
Rodriguez
Edwin Reich
Scott Schlaffman
Choua “Mindy” Thao
Georgeanna Toftum
Clorasteen Wilson

1997

Marjory Aldrich
Jim Christy
Dianne Kimm
Allan Law
Sue Liedl
Larry Cloud Morgan
William Radueg
RaeAnn Ruth
Frankie and Velma
Tyson
Peggy Wells

1996

Vivian Blount
Cynthia Hawkins
Gregory Horan
Dale Hulme
Joe LaGarde
Percy and Lillian Olson
Joan Peterson
Jody Porter
Dave Ronning
Georgia Theis

1995

Laurice Beaudry
Dianne Binns
Leonard Gloeb
Fran Heitzman
Aljuan Hixon
Bruce Lubitz
Mary Robillard
Bill Rowe
Pat Schwartz
Jamie Slattery

1994

John Bobolink
Lori Ellis Boswell
Bill Driscoll
Janet Gostanczik
Shirley Ellen Jensen
Art Johnson
James Francis Kelly
Katherine G. King
Forrest R. Osterholm
Fred Rupp

1993

Eileen Bohn
Francisco Caballero
Sandra Gessler
Frank R. Johnson
David Lund
Don Mooney
Tyrone Smith
Art Stoeberl
Sheila WhiteEagle
Eleanore Whitmyre

1992

Peggy Holmes
Bellecourt
Dorothy Bilheimer
Jane Blattner
Eugene Chelberg
Dr. Kenneth and Grace
Covey
Dorothy Haynes
Norma Schleppegrell
Roger and Donna
Urbanski
Quang Vu
Glen Wilfong

1991

Cynthia Ann Barry
Shirley Benitez
Julia Dinsmore
Dan Edgar
Terry Ford
Alice McHie
Kouthong Vixayvong
Walter White
Marie Wing
Mary Stier Winkels

1990

Ruby Alexander
Dan Celentano
Cheryl Ford
Muriel Gaines
Patrick Hartigan
Tri Dinh Nguyen
Phillip Sayers
Sister Leanore
Stanton
John Stone
Diane Williams

1989

David L. Asmus
Lois V. Boylan
Ron Cronick
Phyllis Gross
Loeung Khi
Dana Lehrer
Sister Charlotte A.
Madigan
William O'Connell
Leo Treadway
Diane Ziegler

1988

Jewell Anderson
Willard A. Brunelle
Dollie D. Foster
Carol LaFavor
Kwame McDonald
Rosita Meehan
Marvin S. Moe
Anastasia Sery
Ray Wilson
Winona Wilson

1987

Robert L. Buckley
Linda Byrne
Mary Jo Copeland
Kathy J. Davis
John Fields
Sandra Huff
Mazi E. Johnson
Lou Anne Kling
Norma P. McDuffie
Pat Schmidgall

1986

Barbara J. Colhapp
San Juana Flores
Bernice E. Genereux
Flo Golod
Louise T. James
Maxine M. Kruschke
Robert Russell
Dana Lee Shato
Vernell Wabasha
Dellie Walz

1985

Ruth G. Andberg
Laurie Colbeck
Alieene Davis
Juanita G. Espinosa
Debra Jones
Elaine La Canne
Grace L. Sandness
Lucille T. Silk
Connie Strandberg
Justina Violette

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Barbara Koster

Text

Sylvia Lindman
and Vicki Itzkowitz

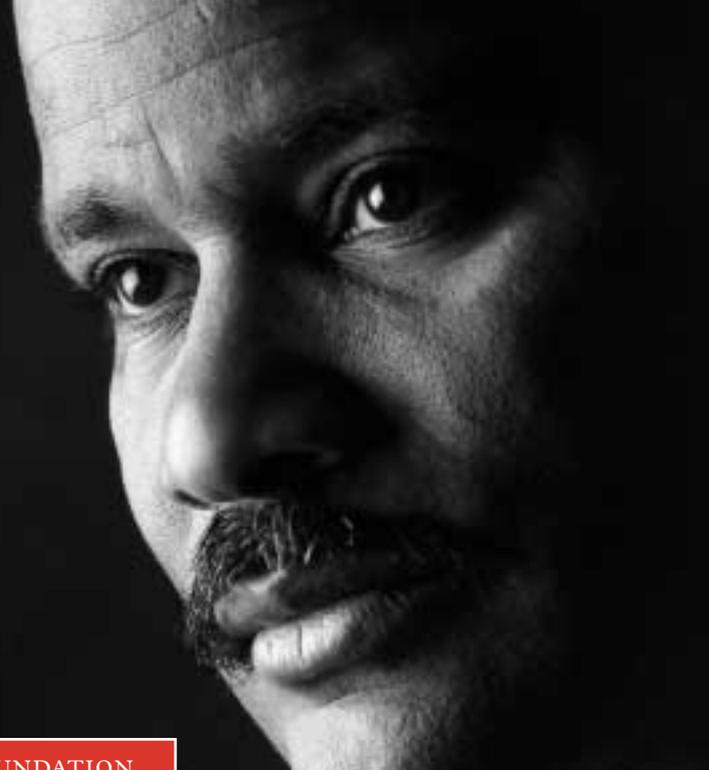
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