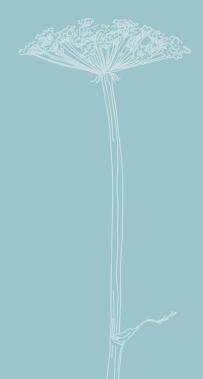


THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION, A MINNESOTA-BASED PRIVATE philanthropic organization, seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations. Through grantmaking, coalition-building, and encouragement of strategic policy reform, we use our resources to attend, unite, and empower those we serve.



2008 VIRGINIA McKNIGHT BINGER AWARDS IN HUMAN SERVICE



Isaac Combs

Robin & Starla Krause

Jimmy Longoria

Patricia Melody

Steve O'Neil



Entrusted with tax-privileged dollars, we at McKnight recognize that we are ACCOUNTABLE BOTH TO OUR PARTNERS AND TO THE COMMUNITIES WE SUPPORT. We are committed to undertaking periodic reviews of all our programs and, as a result, we regularly refine our strategies to make the most of our program-focused investments.

Last fall, after reviewing the unique scope and impact of the Virginia McKnight Binger Awards in Human Service, we made a few changes to further strengthen this hallmark program: We reduced the number of annual awardees from 10 to up to 6, and increased each award from \$7,500 to \$10,000. Both changes are meant to bring greater distinction to each outstanding awardee. In reducing the number of honorees, our awards committee now employs an even more rigorous selection process as well.

Finally, we adjusted the awards' nomination criteria to align with McKnight's mission statement. Selection committee members now look for nominees who "attend, unite, and empower" others to improve the quality of life for present and future generations in Minnesota. These words echo McKnight's own mission, helping clarify how this program gives us continuity of purpose.

One of many things that have *not* changed is how our awardees help demonstrate the true value of effective philanthropy. Though the most common philanthropic gift may be money, our awardees give in other vitally important ways. They give the gift of time, passing hours and days with youth, the elderly, or the ill. They provide compassion and human warmth to those who have been marginalized or otherwise forgotten. Above all, they offer of themselves in a personal way, to one individual at a time, strengthening our entire community in the process.

These fine people reflect the values behind all McKnight's work, and our belief in the individual as the foundation on which all successful societies rest. On behalf of the Foundation and the awards committee, I thank the awardees for their boundless compassion and humble work on behalf of others.

Erika L. Binger Chair, The McKnight Foundation THE VIRGINIA MCKNIGHT BINGER AWARDS IN HUMAN SERVICE

an annual tradition at The McKnight Foundation, reflect the Foundation's deep belief in the virtue and power of compassion. Since its inception, the award has gone to 247 Minnesotans, including this year's group, who have selflessly given time and effort to help others with no expectation of material reward. Each recipient exemplifies the life-changing difference one person can make through service. This booklet announces the 2008 award recipients and describes their work.

The Foundation created the Awards in Human Service in 1985. The awards were renamed 10 years later as a tribute to Virginia McKnight Binger, who served the Foundation for nearly 50 years as a board member, as president from 1974 to 1987, and then as honorary chair until her death in 2002. Although her parents, William L. and Maude L. McKnight, established the Foundation, Mrs. Binger's personal compassion and generosity set the standard for the Foundation's work.

Like Virginia McKnight Binger in her time, those who receive these awards are acutely aware of others' needs. They are nominated in confidence by someone familiar with their work, and the nominations are researched and evaluated independently. To qualify, nominees must live and volunteer in Minnesota and show commitment to helping others achieve a better life, while receiving little or nothing for their own efforts.

The Foundation invites nominations each spring. Beginning in August, a committee of volunteers who are active in various human service fields evaluates the nominations and recommends finalists to the Foundation's board of directors. Each approved awardee receives \$10,000. For more information about the program, visit the Foundation's website at www.mcknight.org.



program

THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

710 South Second Street, Minneapolis 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. Thursday, November 20, 2008

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Kate Wolford

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Cindy Toppin
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PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

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Upon settling in Minnesota in 1993, IBRAHIM AYEH wanted to help other Somalis integrate into their new communities. After attaining a job as a Minneapolis Public School teacher, he helped establish many nonprofit organizations to support Somali youth and families. Ibrahim co-founded and designed programs for the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota, which annually serves over 1,800 youth and adults with employment and social service programs, a women's center, educational support, and community building. About five years ago, Ibrahim



co-founded Somali Action Alliance, which has assisted 5,000 people to register and vote. Always busy, Ibrahim also co-founded the Dugsi Project, and volunteers with *Insight News*, the Center for Excellence in Urban Teaching, the International Charter School, and the Leadership Empowerment and Development Restorative Justice Program.

Ibrahim takes seriously his responsibilities to family and society at large. In 2006, he was recognized as a National Honor Roll Outstanding American Teacher for his exceptional performance motivating and empowering youth. Beyond his work as a teacher or as a volunteer at area nonprofits, Ibrahim has co-planned and led several community celebrations and festivals; in 2000, he co-organized the very first Minnesota conference of Somali Culture and Islamic Values. He regularly mediates between community and nonprofit groups, and donates time to educate the greater community about Somali culture. A lifelong learner, Ibrahim personally financed a teaching exchange stint in Sweden to compare Swedish schools' outreach to immigrant students with their counterparts in Minnesota. Recently, he also partially funded a trip to Africa to gather culturally specific school materials for Somali students, with additional funding provided by the Teachers' Fellowship Fund of Minneapolis. At the core, Ibrahim insists his contributions are driven more by self-interest than altruism: "A united community is an advantage for everybody. As I serve my community, I am also serving myself."

"Ibrahim manifests wisdom in his work and his dedication to the community is characterized by intelligence, hard work, empathy, and sagacity."

— Saeed Osman Fahia



A 16-year employee of the Boys and Girls Club, ISAAC COMBS spends his days ensuring that every child recognizes their own true value. As program director at the Mt. Airy Club, just blocks from the State Capitol, Isaac employs sports and activities, counseling, and humor to foster leadership. Isaac takes struggling youth under his wing, assigning responsibilities to create role models who younger members can look up to as leaders and friends. With a commitment that far exceeds his hours on the job, Isaac spends weekends, evenings, and even vacation time connecting with "his" kids in the



community, at dance recitals, graduation ceremonies, football games, and more. With relationships made stronger by such personal investments, many of the teens seek Isaac's help choosing colleges, applying for financial aid, and finding jobs. In lending a hand, Isaac has helped forge a community network of parents, teachers, coaches, police officers, and business owners—all working on behalf of the goodness of the city's young people.

Isaac was born and raised in St. Paul's Frogtown area, and lived many years in the Mt. Airy public housing family site. In his early teens, Isaac joined a gang, the memory of which has helped him understand the issues confronting young people in the inner city; he uses his experience daily to gently dissuade young men at the Club from becoming involved in gangs. Having grown up amid poverty, discrimination, gangs, and violence, Isaac is proud to now empower young people with a persistent hope for their better futures. His life experience has also prompted him to pursue a degree in Criminal Justice. After he earns his BA from Metropolitan State University next year, Isaac plans to deepen his work to combat multigenerational cycles of violence, by helping young people to make positive choices by acknowledging their true worth and feelings. Isaac is committed to building awareness of the interlocking forces of poverty and unemployment, ignorance and racism, and urban violence. Few might embrace such difficult work, but with a deep love of community and young people, Isaac says, "It's my duty."

"Isaac is a true student and lover of life, living each day committed to personal growth, humility, human connection, compassion, and hope."

— Cristina Olseen



Five years ago, sisters ROBIN AND STARLA KRAUSE made a decision to "cross the street" and get involved with their local grade school, the Loring Community School. To teach children about healthy cooking, they started an after-school program and onsite gardens that are maintained by the students and their families. Over time, their idea has produced much more than vegetables; it has blossomed into the Kids Cook Classroom program, which now operates year-round at the north Minneapolis school. Through the volunteer program, inner-city students learn about plant science



and healthful, delicious food preparation. Taking advantage of the students' hands-on experience, the school's teachers sow the garden's lessons into diverse curriculums in math and language arts, creating lesson plans around recipe reading, plant growth, garden planning, composting, and harvest timing. In the kitchen the students work in teams, peers teaching each other everything they have learned about the connections between food and nutrition.

Having grown up cooking and gardening on a Kansas farm, the sisters are committed to teaching the value of whole foods in general health and well-being. In addition to 30 years in the culinary arts, Starla (who is also a caterer) and Robin (a food stylist) have degrees in food science and cooking. Beyond their work at the school, the entire Camden neighborhood benefits from Robin and Starla's involvement in successful campaigns to support a local library and other community improvements; they work tirelessly to unite their neighbors behind projects that link Loring School with the neighborhood. With the students' help, the sisters hold garden potluck dinners, pancake breakfasts, and volunteer luncheons to inspire families and neighbors to contribute efforts to the garden and other activities. Undaunted by the prospect of collaborating with more than 350 students in gardening, teaching, and cooking, Starla and Robin volunteer countless hours at Loring. From their first seeds planted to their harvest feasts, Robin and Starla nourish the Loring community through their engagement and leadership.

"Starla and Robin are ambassadors to the community, and work tirelessly to improve the quality of life for all their neighbors."

— Edie McDonald





According to one nominator, muralist JIMMY LONGORIA'S real art is "bringing out what's best in young people so that they create something beautiful for the common good." Even working alone, painting artful outdoor murals to displace graffiti would require considerable commitment and skill—but Jimmy doesn't work alone. With his programs, Mentoring Peace Through Art and Urban Camouflage, Jimmy has spent countless hours over the past decade guiding a hardworking volunteer band of youth in everything from mural planning to construction, design, painting,



and clean-up. Jimmy insists that creating wall-size murals in our cities' toughest neighborhoods is only part of his mission. More important is how he mentors each young team during the job. Emphasizing collaboration that benefits from each contributor's special talents, Jimmy helps the youth to become responsible adults through community service.

Believing that older artists have an obligation to mentor and train younger artists, Jimmy bundles training in art and project design with lessons in self-examination, service, and trust. Most of Jimmy's time is donated. Reaching out to metro high schools and community centers, Jimmy assembles and maintains a team of roving young adults, collaborating to beautify building walls and deter unwanted graffiti. Building peace through art, Jimmy breaks down stereotypes and geographic boundaries to connect individually with each young person. All ages and ethnicities are welcomed. Suburbanites work with youth from the inner city. Without regard to race or gender, everyone steadies each others' ladders. Including international students on intercultural visits to Minnesota, the scaffolding plays host to diverse languages and cultures, united to beautify their shared world. Through his work, Jimmy lives out his commitment to community, allowing the life stories of youth to be reflected visually in the murals they create. In Jimmy's words, "The goal is not the wall. The goal is the kid."

"A conversation with Jimmy inspires you to believe in the potential of every child, teen, and young adult."

— David Hondlik



For PATRICIA MELODY, service to others is more than noble charity; it is a responsibility. As an oblate (which means "offering") of the Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery, Pat embraces a secular life filled with joy and supported by prayer, study, and the pursuit of meaningful work. In 1982, Pat first answered a call in her church bulletin for volunteers at St. Paul's Dorothy Day Center. Nowadays, she devotes 25 hours weekly to helping individuals and families facing homelessness, primarily through the Center's food shelf where she helps distribute food and



supplies. Pat tailors her services to each individual's needs—from providing bus tokens to transport clients to work, to offering support with rental security deposits, living expenses, or personal grooming. Blending wisdom and empathy, Pat acts as a confidant and advocate in difficult situations.

In pursuit of permanent justice, Pat also strives to educate the public about homelessness while pushing for supportive legislation. Skilled as both a fundraiser and a recruiter of volunteers, she knows well that the simple act of helping another can lead to discovering one's own meaningful vocation. After spending years caring for her own ailing mother, Pat became a volunteer with HealthEast Hospice, through which she now provides care and kindness to other hospice patients. For six years, Pat has also been a member of Transfiguration Catholic Church's Social Justice Ministry; she has brought three forums on homelessness and poverty to the church. At Transfiguration, Pat schedules speakers, shares news with the community and the media, writes letters to inspire action, and encourages fellow parishioners to get involved—all while continuing to volunteer elsewhere when duty calls, such as helping at organizations like Project Homeless Connect or providing alternative healing opportunities to the poor. Whether she's serving a neighbor or a stranger, Pat believes, "We are each other's family."

"Pat is heaven-sent... Even when her own schedule is very full, she finds time to reach out to people in need."

— In. Bob Hart





Many of Duluth's social justice successes in recent decades have connections to the contributions of STEVE O'NEIL. After earning a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Minnesota, Duluth, Steve worked as a community organizer, often focusing on family farmers and farm issues. In 1989, Steve co-founded Duluth's Loaves and Fishes, a nonprofit working for peace and justice and providing hospitality for the homeless in the Catholic Worker Community tradition. In 1990, he co-founded Northern Communities Land Trust, a nonprofit service that has



helped more than 130 low-income individuals and families achieve homeownership. Steve began work in 2002 with the Gabriel Project, an outreach program through Churches United in Ministry to address needs in Duluth's lowest-income neighborhoods. Through the Gabriel Project, Steve has led efforts to improve housing, police protection, and social services, while collaborating to help create residences that provide stable housing, support services, and dignity to homeless or otherwise marginalized individuals and families.

Steve, who is also a St. Louis County Commissioner, embraces community engagement as a way to carry grassroots advocacy to action. Year-round, you can find him around the region serving coffee, washing dishes, distributing advocacy materials, or helping people find what they need, always with a smile and a kind word. His insight and assistance serve projects ranging from public education to tenant's rights, housing code enforcement, and vacant properties initiatives. Reaching even beyond St. Louis County, Steve has been involved in the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and in Heading Home Minnesota, a statewide homelessness reduction initiative; he also led development and implementation of the first smoke-free ordinances in Moose Lake and Duluth. With community organizing still today at the core of all his work, Steve has become a role model of service to others. Said one Gabriel Project co-worker, "One of the most important things Steve has done for the community is to provide mentoring and training to countless other advocates, activists, and organizers."

"Steve helps others find their strength and the power to achieve their own goals."

— Frank Jewell

previous Recipients

Since 1985, The McKnight Foundation has honored 247 recipients of the Virginia McKnight Binger Awards in Human Service, including this year's honorees.

The recipients from the past 23 years are listed below:

2007

Ada Beh Johanna Christianson Virginia Clark Bernice Cowl Gordon Charlnitta Ellis Rachel Kincade Darcy Knight Barbara Lewis Mary F. Nelson Mark Ochu

2006

Dee Cotten May Pa Heu Russ Irvin Shegitu Kebede Sarah Mollet Vivian Peterson Erik Rodriguez Jim Soderberg Jodi Townsend Patrick Wood

2005

Said Salah Ahmed Linda Brown Wafiq Fannoun Melvin Giles Ora Hokes Beth Holger Curtis Levang Larry and Noreen Luck Sister Jean Thuerauf Hedwidge "Hedy" Tripp

2004

Carol Voss

James Andre
Elsie Dugar
Mahmoud El-Kati
Donna Gillen
Mary Gnerer
Daniel Hawkins
Rayome Clark Koehler
Mary Maas
Margaret McBride
Christine Norton
Kay Trainor

2003

Cal Appleby
James Dodge
Jayne Frank
Linda Jemison
Cindy Johnson
Nathaniel Khaliq
Nancy Meyers
Rajiv Shah
John Siegfried
Char Thompson

2002

Andrew Benjamin Martha Cardenas Bonham Cross Mohamed Essa Ann Hooley Jacqueline Kavanagh Ed and Fern Ostberg Ron Schwartz Margaret Smith Gail Weigle

2001

Susan Baxter George Failes Bertha Givins Maria Inés Hitateguy Barb King Marge Melich Kristine Reiter Muriel Simmons V.J. Smith Sang Vu

2000

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

1999

Henry Bruns
Ernesto DelVillar, Sr.
Marcelle Diedrich
Denise Gubrud and
Margarita Reese
Darlene Edwards
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
Algjuan 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



VIRGINIA McKNIGHT BINGER AWARDS IN HUMAN SERVICE

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The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based private philanthropic organization, seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations. Through grantmaking, coalition-building, and encouragement of strategic policy reform, McKnight uses its resources to attend, unite, and empower those it serves. Grantmaking priorities include support of children and families, the region and communities, the arts, the environment, and scientific research in selected fields; its primary geographic focus is the state of Minnesota. Founded in 1953 and endowed by William L. McKnight and Maude L. McKnight, The McKnight Foundation had assets of approximately \$2.3 billion and granted about \$93 million in 2007. More information and grantmaking guidelines are available at www.mcknight.org.



