

11th Annual Nancy Latimer Convening for Children & Youth

2017 “Nancy” Award Honoree Carol Miller



Carol Miller has worked in some aspect of early care and education during her entire career. She got hooked while working as an assistant teacher in a Minneapolis Model Cities Day Care program during an Urban Studies semester and never looked back. With a background in child psychology, social work and preschool education she taught and led a parenting education program for the brand new YWCA Children's Center and from there transitioned to Hennepin County Human Services.

Carol Miller has worked for Hennepin County for 37 years, supervising and later managing many programs serving young children and their families. As a social worker she licensed homes for Foster Care and Family Child Care, and started a special needs child care program. Carol launched the first Hennepin County Child Care Assistance unit and later returned to manage the program during Welfare Reform.

Carol has a passion for making all the bureaucratic pieces fit together for young children and their families. She initiated an Early Childhood Services Unit to support children with high needs and disabilities, working across all child serving aspects of social services, public health and Early Childhood Special Education. This focus on meeting the multiple needs of children and families to support children's development continued through most of her career. In more recent years that focus included leading an Early Childhood Initiative for the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, collaborating on 500 Under 5 and the Northside Achievement Zone, chairing the formation of the Metro Alliance for Healthy Families, working on the Race to the Top federal grant, and most recently leading a Hennepin County initiative to screen and provide early childhood scholarships to County involved young children.

Making the pieces fit has also meant trying to alter some of those pieces. Carol has worked on public policy and legislation over the course of her career. Her focus on supporting early childhood development has included work on legislation to improve interagency early intervention, fund and support child care assistance, and in recent years policy around Parent Aware and Early Learning Scholarships. She looks forward to this year's expansion of those scholarships to serve foster children, children under Child Protective Services and homeless children down to birth, because high quality programs for high needs children will have a major impact on their futures.

Carol will retire from Hennepin County this summer, but won't be retiring from being Audrey's Grandma!

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2017 "Nancy" Award Honoree Todd Otis



Todd Otis was born and raised in St. Paul, Minnesota. Todd graduated cum laude from Harvard College in 1967, then joined the Peace Corps and served in Senegal from 1967 to 1969. He then received an MS degree in journalism in 1970 from Columbia University. He is married to Caren Dewar and has two daughters Katharine and Madeline. He lives in Minneapolis.

Todd worked in corporate community relations for Dayton Hudson and First Minneapolis in the 1970s. He then worked for an association of small businesses.

In 1978 Todd was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives where he served from 1979 to 1990. He focused on energy, education, and chaired the House Economic Development Committee from 1987 to 1990.

He served as DFL (Democratic) Party chair from 1990 to 1993 and then did public affairs consulting from 1995 to 2001, focusing on early childhood and environmental issues. Todd has written articles and a book (*A Review of Nuclear Energy in the United States: Hidden Power*) on energy issues. He has served on the Board of Directors of a number of Minnesota-based organizations.

He founded Ready 4 K in 2001 and served as its President until the end of 2011. He is now the Senior Vice President for External Affairs at Think Small.

Todd enjoys vigorous physical activities including tennis, skiing, jogging, weight training and recently roller-blading. He loves movies, reading, writing, and above all, the company of his family and dear friends.

2017 Special Recognition Award Recipients



TraNeicia Sylvester

TraNeicia Sylvester, from St. Paul, is a Program Manager in Reproductive and Sexual Health at Check Yo' Self Health and Wellness Center at High School for Recording Arts. TraNeicia is a mother of two children, six-year-old DaNae who is finishing kindergarten, and JaMir, a 3-year-old, attends a child-care center in St. Paul. TraNeicia was a fierce parent advocate for accessible and quality childcare in the 2017 legislation session. TraNeicia has captured the minds and hearts of all legislators when she testified in committee hearings, spoke up at rallies, and shared her experience as a mother in writing. In addition to her advocacy, TraNeicia is also a certified Doula and uses her many talents to build community and connect with people.



Representative Dave Pinto

Representative Dave Pinto is in his second term in the Minnesota House of Representatives, where he represents the Highland Park, Macalester-Groveland, and West Seventh neighborhoods of St. Paul. He has focused much of his legislative work on the integration of early-childhood policy; he is the founder of the Prenatal to Three Policy Forums and serves on the Governor's Early Learning Council and the Legislative Task Force on Child Protection. Outside of the Legislature, he serves as an assistant Ramsey County attorney, specializing in prosecuting crimes of gender violence; until recently, he directed statewide training and protocol development for the state Safe Harbor system, which combats and responds to the sexual exploitation of youth. In August 2017, he will participate in a prestigious fellowship in legislative leadership development through the Council of State Governments.



Representative Jenifer Loon

Representative Jenifer Loon was first elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2008 representing Eden Prairie, District 48B. Now in her fifth term, Rep. Loon chairs the House Education Finance Committee and also serves on the Taxes, Ways and Means, and Commerce and Regulatory Reform committees. She began serving in Republican leadership at the beginning of the 2011 session when she was honored to be elected an Assistant Majority Leader by her colleagues. In 2013, Rep. Loon was tapped to serve as the Deputy Minority Leader for the Republican caucus in the Minnesota House. In 2015, Representative Loon was named Chair of the House Education Finance Committee. Jenifer Loon graduated from Augustana College (Sioux Falls, South Dakota) in 1985 with a BA in Government and International Affairs. Jenifer and her husband, Doug have two daughters.