

RONALD NESTOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

2020- PATRICIA S. NISBET

Patricia S. Nisbet is an Office Director at the WV DHHR Bureau for Medical Services over the Long-Term Care, Behavioral Health and Home and Community-Based Services Units. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Arts in Special Education, specializing in Early Intervention and Severe and Profound Handicaps, all from West Virginia University. She is the former Director of the Home and Community-Based Services Unit and the Program Manager for the Intellectual/Developmental Disability Waiver Program at BMS as well as the State-wide Manager for the Specialized Family Care Program with WVUCED. Prior to this she taught special education in Roane County Schools, worked with Westbrook Health Services developing group homes and day programs and worked at Spencer State Hospital (a long time ago!). She would like you to know she is also the proud grandmother of 11 grandchildren, and someone always needs a babysitter!

2019- SGT. STEVE HAMRICK

Sgt. Steve Hamrick of the Putnam County Sheriff's Department is a West Virginia native and a passionate advocate for victims of financial exploitation and elder abuse. He truly cares about the victims, identifies with them and diligently pursues the perpetrators who rob the elderly of their assets, monies, dignity and pride.

The Legal Aid of West Virginia Financial Exploitation attorneys often call upon Sgt. Hamrick for assistance in investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of financial exploitation. Any time we have a client and victim from the Putnam County area, we automatically breath a sign of relief because we know our client will be in good hands. When we call on Sgt. Hamrick for help, we are always confident that he will thoroughly investigate the matter and give us 125% of his time, talents and efforts. He is thorough, detailed, patient and exceedingly kind to the elderly victims.

Sgt. Steve Hamrick is the most dedicated law enforcement officer I have encountered in the field of elder abuse and financial exploitation. He deserves to be recognized for his eagerness to recognize the need for and impact of the newer financial exploitation criminal statutes, his tireless efforts in bringing the perpetrators to justice, and his inherent kindness to elderly victims who are in desperate need of an advocate who understands their helplessness and distress.

The efforts of Sgt. Hamrick have resulted in many investigations, prosecutions, indictments and convictions of criminals who have taken advantage of the elderly in this state by engaging in the fastest-growing Silent Crime of the 21st century.

Sgt. Hamrick is more than just the investigating police officer in these matters. He becomes an ally, a friend and a true champion.

2018 – JENNIFER TAYLOR

Jennifer Taylor is a tireless advocate of senior issues. As an attorney at Legal Aid of West Virginia, she has uncovered multiple instances of abuse of seniors, particularly those experiencing financial exploitation. She used to be fully dedicated to the Ombudsman unit, which focuses on long-term and elder care. Jennifer learned that many seniors who were unable to make decisions on their own—such as those in nursing homes, requiring substantial care for physical and mental ailments—were being deprived of their life savings, oftentimes by persons they trusted the most: their children and family members.

Jennifer has worked hard to create presentations and trainings to explain the significance of financial exploitation problems facing our community. In her own words, she has said she will present on the issues of elder abuse to “anyone who wants to listen.” The list often includes nursing homes, American Bar Association seminars, financial planning seminars, Supreme Court trainings for judges and mental hygiene commissioners, as well as training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and other key agencies.

As a result of informing decision-makers about this issue and its effect on seniors, she has created opportunities in the area for 2 ½ additional attorneys addressing the issues of financial exploitation throughout West Virginia. Jennifer mentors these newer attorneys and works closely with them to identify issues, develop litigation strategies, working to limit exploitation and, when appropriate, assisting victims in the criminal prosecution of their exploiters.

In many cases, she has worked to inform lawmakers of the issues and problems so they can craft solutions. Working with legislators ultimately led to the implementation of additional laws to protect seniors from financial exploitation. These statutes provide greater protection for those who are being exploited, as well as additional remedies, such as attorney’s fees, to increase the victim’s access to justice to address these issues.

Jennifer worked to bring awareness to the issue and, in turn, has brought additional resources forward to address elder abuse and exploitation in West Virginia. To be honest, it really doesn't matter what the issues are – if an attorney is needed Jennifer is there. She fights for the rights of all residents.

2017 – SUSAN “SUSIE” LAYNE

Susan “Susie” Layne’s career began in social services with the Aged and Disabled Waiver Program 26 years ago. In 1998, Susie became an Adult Protective Services Supervisor and served in this role for 9 years. She was then promoted to be the Adult Services Policy Specialist where she worked to change legislation protecting incapacitated adults, wrote policy for Adult Services, presented on elder abuse, and served on 24 committees. Susie initiated West Virginia’s Elder Abuse Awareness Day in 2010, as well as the Ronald Nestor Award. She currently serves as the Personal Options Program Director for the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services, where she continues to promote education and awareness of the issue of elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

2016 – DREAMA STANLEY

Adult Protective Services

2015 – STEVE COOPER

Charleston Police Department

2014 – JOAN HUDDALL

2013 – GLENDA SETLER