

RONALD NESTOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

2021- CECILIA “CECE” A. BROWN

Cece has spent her entire career ensuring the health and welfare of West Virginians and for the past 30-plus years, has focused on the ethical treatment and protection of seniors in WV from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Cece has lived and worked in West Virginia her entire life. A graduate of Marshal University with a Social Work degree and a minor in Psychology, Cece has dedicated her life to the health and welfare of others, more specifically, seniors in West Virginia. Cece has held numerous positions throughout her career including Vocational Counselor at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disabilities Director and Product Line Manager at Shawnee Hills, Program Manager at the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities, Program Manager at the Bureau for Medical Services, Quality Assurance Program Manager, and most recently Interim Director of Medicaid Operations at the WV Bureau of Senior Services (BoSS).

Since 1998, Cece has been an integral member of the BoSS Medicaid team that contracts with the Bureau for Medical Services as the Operating Agency to administer the Aged and Disabled Waiver (ADW) and Personal Care Services programs serving seniors across the state. The Aged and Disabled Waiver program is a Medicaid program that allows seniors and individuals with disabilities to stay safely in their homes and communities rather than in a long-term-care facility. Following are a few of Cece’s many accomplishments: An instrumental member of the team that developed the current Incident Management System used by all ADW and Personal Care Services providers statewide. This database is used to monitor the health and safety of seniors and is also used to track and trend safety issues which may need to be addressed with new policies and procedures to maintain safety in the home.

Heading up the BoSS Quality Assurance Advisory Council, which is made up of ADW providers, stakeholders, direct care workers, families, program members, advocates and other individuals interested in quality services and safe home and community-based services. With their Quality Work Plan, the Council works to monitor trends and develop training material, monitoring tools, policies, and procedures to ensure the health and safety of seniors in WV. Following Cece’s leadership, the Council has developed a huge library of training materials, including an Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation training manual, Extreme Situations Guide, Stop the Top 3 Health and Safety Guides for Seniors and numerous other Fact Sheets, brochures, videos and policy guides/protocols used by all ADW and Personal Care services providers.

Cece has spent countless hours responding to agencies and program members regarding complaints, incidents, giving them technical assistance/education, clinical supervision and

working closely with Adult Protective Services (APS) and/or Medicaid Fraud, when indicated. Cece recently developed a template that is sent to APS to alert them of potential unsafe situations to request that follow-up be conducted to ensure the health and safety of our seniors so they can remain safely in the community.

Regardless of the issue or challenge, Cece never focuses on the negative or difficult aspects of a situation, but rather works towards the solution, always with the senior's best interest and safety in mind. Cece's dedication to research, quality improvement and education over the years has allowed countless seniors to remain safely in their homes and communities. Cece always brings senior health and safety issues to the forefront to increase awareness, to educate and to create new policies and procedures for senior programs so that the people serving our WV seniors have the knowledge and skills to better serve them safely.

Even after suffering tremendous personal loss, Cece turned her grief into positive action, focusing on improving the health and safety of others and working to protect seniors across WV. Cece Brown truly embodies the spirit of this award, with her selfless dedication to ensuring the health and safety of all WV seniors.

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 breathe 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