



July 27, 2015

Celebrating Our History and Honoring Our Gems

As Consumer Voice celebrates our 40th anniversary we want to take this opportunity to reflect on our past and recognize the individuals who shaped our organization. In honor of the 40-year ruby anniversary we will highlight Consumer Voice's Gems which include key leaders, organizations, and special moments that have made a significant impact on our organization's development, mission, and advocacy.

For this month's gem we celebrate Citizen Advocacy Groups (CAGs) and family members

Family members and citizen advocacy groups (CAGs) have been instrumental to the advocacy of Consumer Voice since its founding. In fact, representatives of citizen advocacy groups were part of the group of advocates brought together by Elma Holder, Consumer Voice founder, to present concerns and recommendations for reform to the attendees of a nursing home industry conference in 1975. Following the meeting, the advocates recognized the need for a national organization to represent the voice of consumers and address substandard nursing home care leading to the founding of Consumer Voice.



Citizen advocates receiving awards in 1999 with Elma Holder, Consumer Voice Founder

In 1978, Consumer Voice was awarded a grant to organize and conduct the first national training for State Ombudsman programs. Consumer Voice Board members (all citizen advocacy group representatives) acted as the advisory group, assisted with the development of the training agenda, and attended the training as participants or trainers.

The membership and support from citizen advocacy groups and individual family members of long-term care consumers over the past 40 years has provided Consumer Voice with a valuable perspective of caregiving and family member advocacy. Representatives of citizen advocacy groups have always been a vital part of Consumer Voice leadership, both on the Governing Board and Leadership Council, and of our advocacy as part of the Consumer Voice [Action Network](#).



Lou O'Reilly, Texas Advocates for Nursing Home Residents (TANHR) founder

In addition to lending their invaluable perspective to our public policy agenda, representatives of citizen advocacy groups and individual family members have supported other family members, advocates, long-term care ombudsmen, and consumers by sharing their knowledge and expertise during Consumer Voice Conferences and other training opportunities. Individuals across the country have benefited from hearing about their advocacy strategies and successes, such as starting and maintaining Family Councils, effective problem solving and communication skills, calling attention to the dangers of bed rails, and improving state regulations to protect and enhance the rights of Family Councils.



Katherine Bates receiving a Consumer Voice Leadership Award in 1998

Family members and citizen advocacy group members share a unique and important voice as caregivers and advocates for their loved ones. They are often the first to speak up about care issues and are dedicated to improving the quality

of care and life for their family member and others. Due to their personal experience with long-term care services and supports they are passionate advocates and a vital part of our history, current advocacy, and future work.



Martha Deaver, President, Arkansas Advocates for Nursing Home Residents (AANHR), receiving the 2005 Janet Tulloch Memorial Advocacy Award

Visit our website for more information about [citizen advocacy groups](#) and for information and support for [family members](#).

You are invited to join us in celebrating 40 years of making quality care matter by signing this [e-card](#), sending a congratulatory message to info@theconsumervoice.org, becoming a [member](#), and/or supporting our current and future work with a [contribution](#).

Like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and visit our [40th Anniversary](#) webpage for additional information and opportunities to celebrate with us.

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