



June 29, 2015

## **Celebrating Our History and Honoring Our Gems**

*As Consumer Voice celebrates our 40<sup>th</sup> 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 long-term care ombudsmen.**

Consumer Voice has a long history of working with and supporting the work of long-term care ombudsmen (LTCO). Long-term care ombudsmen are invaluable advocates for long-term care consumers and essential to the advocacy of Consumer Voice.

In fact, a few state LTC ombudsmen developmental specialists attended the first annual meeting of Consumer Voice (then NCCNHR, National Citizen's Coalition for Nursing Home Reform) in May 1977, along with individuals representing citizen groups, legal services programs, and representatives from government agencies involved in nursing home work. As the leading national advocacy organization representing consumers in issues related to long-term care, hearing directly from LTCO about long-term care issues and consumer experiences, both locally and statewide, is essential to our advocacy.

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*Joani Latimer, Virginia State LTCO, Elma Holder, Consumer Voice Founder, and Sue Wheaton, Former Ombudsman Specialist at the Administration on Aging*

The National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP) was one of the 22 national organizations in the Campaign for Quality Care (CQC) that was launched in 1986 by Elma Holder, Consumer Voice's founder. The CQC met regularly for a year to review the findings of the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) report titled, Improving the Quality of Care in Nursing Homes, and developed recommendations to present to Congress.

Following the presentation of the recommendations from the CQC to Congress, the Nursing Home Reform Act was introduced and the Consumer Voice led a national movement for its passage in the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA '87). State and local LTCO across the country joined the movement supporting the passage of OBRA '87 and encouraged others to engage in advocacy supporting OBRA '87 by providing information to residents, family members, and others.



*NALLTCO Members during Consumer Voice event*

In 1993, the Administration on Aging (AoA) awarded Consumer Voice with its first three-year grant to operate the National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC) and Consumer Voice has operated NORC, in cooperation with the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD), ever since. NORC provides support, technical

assistance and training to the 53 State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs and their statewide networks of almost 600 regional (local) programs.



*Elma Holder, Consumer Voice Founder, signing AoA grant to operate the National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC). Pictured with Sue Wheaton, Bill Benson, and Jack McCarthy, former Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Administration on Aging*

In addition to participating in major milestones of Consumer Voice history, LTCO continue to be a significant part of the leadership of Consumer Voice, by serving on the Governing Board, Leadership Council, and other workgroups and committees that guide and support our advocacy. LTCO often assist Consumer Voice with identifying consumers who may be interested in sharing their perspective regarding their quality of life and care in long-term care facilities or receiving LTC services and supports in the community. State and local ombudsmen, staff and volunteers, have a critical perspective on the lives of long-term care consumers as they advocate on behalf of and with consumers to address individual issues and systemic issues. LTCO significantly enhance our consumer education and public policy efforts by sharing their unique experiences as a consumer advocate, distributing Consumer Voice resources, and informing consumers, family members, and others of opportunities to take action.



*Sara Hunt, former Louisiana State LTCO and current NORC Consultant, Carol Scott, former Missouri State LTCO, Esther Houser, former Oklahoma State LTCO, and Virginia Fraser, former*

*Colorado State LTCO*

For more information about the history of the long-term care ombudsman program visit [this page](#) and to learn how to contact your state LTCO program click [here](#).

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](mailto: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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