

2021 NASW- MICHIGAN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT - CAROL GOSS, MSW



Carol A. Goss has been a champion for children and youth since even before beginning her professional career as a social worker. From her time at the University of Michigan in 1966, at Delta Sigma Theta, a service-oriented sorority, she tutored children from low-income homes on the west side of Ann Arbor. Carol was subsequently elected president of the chapter and thus began a life-long odyssey to provide leadership in the social welfare arena and to serve low-income children and their families. After graduation, the first position that Carol took was as a caseworker in the Department of Public Welfare for the City of Detroit. Fast forward today and although she is retired since 2014, Carol continues to serve vulnerable families and children as the founder of a new program, Warrior Women against Poverty, in collaboration with the Coalition on Temporary Shelter in Detroit.

Her career spans more than four decades and demonstrates her allegiance to our profession and focus on her goals. She earned a Master of Social Work from Michigan in 1972 after which she continued her professional crusade to help disadvantaged children and families primarily in the non-profit arena with organizations like the Children's Home Society and the Stuart Foundation in California. When she returned to Michigan, she assumed a leadership position at the W. K. Kellogg Foundation where she supervised a project to improve the lives of children living in an impoverished Detroit neighborhood. Carol has proved to be an innovative and dedicated advocate for children and their neighborhoods and has received innumerable awards for her work.

"I learned that social work held many options, and mine was working with individuals and families, but always within the context of neighborhoods," Carol says.

During her tenure as President of the Skillman Foundation, she led a major restructuring that moved the Foundation from solely a grant maker responding to proposals to a change-agent working in partnership with communities where poor children and their families lived. With Carol's leadership the Foundation committed \$100 million to six neighborhoods over 10 years to change the odds that children could become healthy and productive adults. With such financial support the Foundation was able to attract high quality youth development programs to work where these children lived – in their neighborhoods; and to improve the local schools. Such funding provided opportunities for neighborhood leaders to organize and mobilize within their communities on behalf of children. The goal was to build a coalition committed to making a difference in these communities. Hence, more children were enrolled in high quality programs, and more families were active in their communities. While there is a long way to go there is momentum and a movement that is working on behalf of Detroit children. At this juncture, three of the six neighborhoods, southwest Detroit, Cody-Rouge and Osborne have benefitted from increased investment and improved outcomes for the children and families in their communities.

Amongst her many accolades, Carol was named the 2007 James A. Joseph Lecturer by the Association of Black Foundation Executives. Crain's Detroit Business cited her as one of Southeast Michigan's Most Influential Women, an honor that the respected weekly bestows every five years to the region's most dynamic and powerful women. The Detroit News named Goss a 2010 Michiganiaan of the Year; that year she was also awarded an honorary doctorate by Eastern Michigan University. In 2009 she received the Grantmakers for Children. Youth & Families honored her with the 2009 Fred Rogers Leadership Award. In 2008, Goss was selected as the Eleanor Josaitis Unsung Hero and recipient as part of the Shining Light Awards.

She has served on the board of City Connect Detroit, the Council of Michigan Foundations, the Council on Foundations, the Education Achievement Authority, Living Cities, New Detroit Inc., the University of Michigan Alumni Association, and the Youth Development Commission. She is currently a member of the board of directors of the Detroit Children's Fund, Safe Routes to Schools the National Partnership, BoardSource, and Lutheran Social Services of Michigan

Carol once said, "I have to do whatever I can to help the children." She means this with every fiber of her body and soul.