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Probation Programming



State Probation Administrator Ellen Brokofsky Given Ron Volkmer Practitioner Award



Ellen Fabian Brokofsky receives the Ron Volkmer Practitioner Award from Tom Richards, Manager of Governmental & Community Relations with OPPD and board member of the Concord Mediation Center.

Concord Mediation Center held its annual "Pathways Award" Luncheon on Friday, June 24, 2016 at the Field Club of Omaha.

State Probation Administrator, Ellen Fabian Brokofsky, was honored with the Ron Volkmer Practitioner Award. With four decades of experience in juvenile and adult probation, Brokofsky has been instrumental in the creation of innovative, community-based approaches for juveniles and adults engaged in the probation system, assisting them in becoming productive citizens.

Brokofsky credits her team at the Administrative Office of Probation for their efforts to enhance safe communities by providing quality, ethical services in the face of economic challenges. The Ron Volkmer Practitioner Award, named for Creighton law professor and long-time Concord Mediation Center board member, honors practitioners who apply Concord Mediation Center's mission to their professional or volunteer conflict resolution efforts.

Ellen Fabian Brokofsky was named State Probation Administrator on October 1, 2005, to direct the statewide delivery of Probation services in Nebraska.

Former Sarpy County Chief Probation Officer and veteran to Probation, Ms. Brokofsky began as a probation officer in 1975 and was a Chief Probation Officer in Sarpy, Cass and Otoe counties for 15 years prior to her appointment as State Probation Administrator. Ms. Brokofsky has a master's degree in management from Bellevue University, is a licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselor, is Past President of the National Juvenile Court Services Association (NJCSA), Past President of the National Association of Probation Executives (NAPE), and is the Past Adult Interstate Compact Commissioner for Nebraska.



Left to right: Mary Visek, Chief Probation Officer District 4J; Corey Steel, State Court Administrator; Debra Denny, Director of Dispute Resolution; Susan Barnard, Office Services Manager; Ellen Fabian Brokofsky, Probation Administrator; Steve Rowoldt, Deputy Probation Administrator; and Jodi York, Chief Probation Officer District 2.

June 24, 2016

Nebraska State Probation Administrator Ellen Fabian Brokofsky credited the incredible work of the staff of the Probation system when receiving the Ron Volkmer Practitioner Award on June 24, 2016. Her remarks are below:

First, let me say I am humbled to have even been considered for the Ron Volkmer Practitioner Award, let alone receive it. When I received the call from Board Member Tom Richards advising I had been selected, I thought he was kidding. That said, after some discussion I advised Tom I would accept this award on behalf of the incredible work of the staff of the Nebraska Probation system.

As I understand it, the premise of this award is to honor practitioners who apply the Concord Mediation Center's mission to create pathways of constructive dialogue and conflict resolution through consensus building activities. In that vein, the Nebraska Probation system has endured extensive change over the last 10 years, transforming itself from a static governmental entity to a dynamic organization ready to address the growing needs of our state's population. Instrumental to this change was a commitment to actively engage the community in the change talk. It was our goal to come to the table and begin a dialogue with families, treatment and service providers, law enforcement officials, and those objecting to finding alternatives to jails and detention centers for our population. All participated in finding solutions. It was not easy but we were at the table.

I had the privilege of leading the larger conversation regarding this transformation by introducing new evidence based principles and practices into probation work on both the county and state level. Probation staff turned the system upside down by properly assessing individuals, matching their needs with appropriate services, seeking out new services, applying motivational interviewing techniques to promote buy-in and learning how to provide our probationers a new way of thinking.

Although I've actually been a practitioner of sorts for over 40 years with all of those years in service to the Courts, and to the probation system, I and others struggled moving forward with this change effort, facing adversity almost daily. However, I am the fortunate one as over the years I reached a position where I was able to provide leadership as the State Probation Administrator and take on the serious role of decision making as it applied to statewide reform in both juvenile and adult probation supervision. Our Probation management team included Chief Probation Officers in local jurisdictions and our administrative staff. We realized that only through team building, facilitated problem solving discussion with the judiciary, and other stakeholders, and education as to the purpose and sensibility of change, was there any hope of realizing a new, more effective way of doing business. Ironic that those very important elements are the same factors espoused by the Concord Mediation Center in assisting with conflict resolution.

Today, the staff of the Nebraska Probation System is more comfortable with change and are committed to collaboration and constructive dialogue as a means to solve issues.

In closing, please allow me to express my gratitude to my family. My husband Rick, my son Patrick, and granddaughter Megan Davey. My daughter Maryellen Stanton, and granddaughter Sara Stanton. These are the people that sacrificed so I could serve, so I could lead. You see, as my friend Steve Rowoldt (who is here today) says "Probation service is in our soul."

Thank you also, Ron Volkmer and Cindy Tierney and to the Concord Board of Directors and especially Tom Richards who began his journey of service 40 years ago with me advocating always for constructive change and good solutions. Thank you Corey Steel, our State Court Administrator, Deputy Probation Administrator Steve Rowoldt, Sarpy County Chief Probation Officer Jodi York and my right hand at work, Susan Barnard for representing our Probation System and being my guests today.

Thank you.