

**College of Public Affairs and Community Service
Alumni Award for Excellence in Public Service
2003 Recipients**



James R. Blue is the executive director and chief executive officer of CEDARS Youth Services and The CEDARS Home for Children Foundation in Lincoln, Nebraska. Mr. Blue earned a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice in 1984 and a master of social work degree from UNO in 1986. A licensed clinical social worker as well as a licensed mental health practitioner, Mr. Blue is a governor-appointed member of the Nebraska Health and Human Services System Partnership Council and the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Corrections= Juvenile Justice Coalition. Mr. Blue is a 2001 recipient of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services= Commissioners Award for outstanding leadership and service in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Mr. Blue has served as an adjunct faculty member in the sociology department of Nebraska Wesleyan University and currently serves on the Nebraska Wesleyan/Union College Joint Social Work Program Advisory Council.

Mel Harrington, a resident of Sioux Falls, South Dakota) graduated with a master of social work degree from UNO in May 1975. He is currently the area counseling director for Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota. Mr. Harrington serves on the UNO School of Social Work Advisory Board, the Sioux Falls School District Head Start Advisory Committee, and the Berakhah House (a group home for people with AIDS). He is a mental health debriefer for the Sioux Empire Critical Incident Stress Management Team and a practicum Instructor for the UNO School of Social Work.

Zenola M. Hilliard entered the Goodrich Scholarship Program in 1973 and graduated from UNO in 1976. In 1979 she earned a law degree from Creighton University. In 1979 Ms. Hillard received a Reginald Heber Smith Fellowship and began working for the Central Arkansas Legal Services. She entered private practice in 1982 and has been the sole proprietor of the Hillard Law office from 1983 until the present.

Over the last 20 years, Ms. Hilliard has built a substantial record of community service, having served as a municipal judge for three years, represented a sewer improvement district, served as a school board attorney for several school districts and represented three cities as city attorney. In July 2002, she returned to her first love - legal services. She is currently a staff attorney with the Center for Arkansas Legal Services, which provides free legal assistance to low-income persons in central and south Arkansas. She is married to the Rev. R. L. Tisdale, an AME minister, and has one grandson, Darryl Wayne, who is the apple of her eye.

Ginny Hronek was the first undergraduate female student to take a course in the UNO Department of Criminal Justice, and earned both a bachelor of science in criminal justice degree and a master of science in criminal justice degree from UNO. Ms. Hronek was a program administrator for the Nebraska Department of Corrections before moving to Rochester, NY in 1978. She taught criminal justice at State University of New York - Brockport for ten years, where she pioneered and administered the school's Center for Excellence in Instruction. Today she is a self-employed trainer and consultant. She conducts leadership and team development training for criminal justice agencies and businesses. Ginny has two children, Julia Ciaramitaro and Ben Burns, and a granddaughter.

Paul Landow has an extensive record of public service. Paul received a bachelor of arts degree from John F. Kennedy College in 1971, a master of public administration degree from UNO in 1994, and a Ph.D. from UNL in 1999, specializing in public administration and political behavior. Currently the chief of staff for Omaha Mayor Michael Fahey, Mr. Landow is also an instructor in for the UNO School of Public Administration. He served as district manager for U.S. Congressman Peter Hoagland as well as the executive director of the Nebraska Democratic Party.

Mary Lopez received a bachelor of arts degree in art education from the University of Iowa in 1977, a master of science degree in special education from UNO 1983, and a master of public administration degree from UNO in 1998. Ms. Lopez is the internship coordinator for the UNO School of Public Administration. Prior to this, she was the director of Safe Futures, a youth violence prevention consortium that received the OPPD Service to Community Safety Award in 2001. Ms. Lopez has a long history of community service in both the government and non-profit sectors, currently serving on the Omaha Library Foundation Board, Nebraska StoryArts Advisory Board and the Saint Vincent de Paul Global Outreach Committee. In prior years, she served as vice chairman of Governor Nelson's Welfare Reform Task Force and Mayor PJ Morgan's Master Plan Advisory Committee. She served two terms on the Catholic Charities Board of Directors and was awarded the Archbishop's Distinguished Board Member Award for 2001. She was appointed as a commissioner for the Omaha Housing Authority in 1989 and later received the Elizabeth Wells Memorial Award for her work nationally in housing and community development.

Steven S. Martin is president and chief executive officer for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska and is a member of its board of directors. Mr. Martin also serves as president and CEO of Omaha Life Insurance Co., Corporate Diversified Services, Inc. (CDSI), and ProPar Services; all are wholly owned subsidiaries of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska. In addition, Mr. Martin serves on the Board of Directors for the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association in Chicago, Illinois; TriWest Healthcare Alliance in Phoenix, Arizona; and Prime Therapeutics, Inc. in Eagan, Minnesota. Mr. Martin also serves on the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska Council on Economic Education.

Prior to joining Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska in March of 2002, Mr. Martin was president, CEO and a board member for Prime Therapeutics, Inc. of Eagan, Minnesota; the

founding executive director for American HomeCare, Inc; regional manager of product development for the HealthCare Services division of the Upjohn Company; co-founder and vice president for HealthCheck, Inc.; and a clinical coordinator at the Menninger Foundation of Topeka, Kansas.

A certified professional in the Academy of HealthCare Management, Mr. Martin earned his bachelor of science degree from Washburn University and his master of arts degree in gerontology from UNO.

Robert Olson is the Chief of Police for the Minneapolis Police Department. In 1999, he was elected president of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), a Washington D.C.-based organization of police chiefs and criminal justice professionals focused on improving policing practices through research, national leadership and debate. Chief Olson, who holds a master of science in criminal justice degree from UNO, is a graduate of the FBI National Executive Institute and the Senior Management Institute for Police.

Chief Olson began his police career with the Omaha Police Department in 1966, and was appointed deputy chief in 1982. In 1987, he was appointed the chief of police for the City of Corpus Christie, Texas. He later served as the commissioner of police in Younkers, New York. In 1999, Chief Olson received the PERF Leadership award, which is presented to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the field of policing.

Josephine Ramos is a life long resident of Omaha, Nebraska. She has a diverse employment background with more than fifteen years of service in the public sector. She has worked as an investigator of civil rights with the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission, served as the executive director for the Chicano Awareness Center, and was the acting director of multicultural affairs for UNO.

Ms. Ramos is currently employed with the Omaha Public Schools as a student/community relations specialist. In addition, she serves on several advisory committees in the non-profit sector, and is a board member with the YWCA-Omaha. Josephine is a graduate of the Goodrich Scholarship Program, earning a bachelor of arts degree in political science. She earned a masters degree in public administration from UNO and is currently pursuing a doctorate degree.

2003 Hubert Locke Distinguished Service Award



State Senator Nancy Thompson has a long and distinguished career of public service to the state of Nebraska and its residents. She was appointed to the Nebraska Unicameral in 1997 and has twice been elected, in 1998 and 2002. She is currently a member of the Appropriations Committee and Executive Board of the Legislature, and chairs the Building Maintenance Committee. She is also chair of the Health and Human Services Committee of the Midwest Council of State Governments and vice chair of the Law and Criminal Justice Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Prior to being appointed to the Unicameral, she was the executive director of the Omaha Community Partnership. Other positions she has held include deputy chief of staff for Governor Ben Nelson and staff assistant for Congressman John Cavanaugh. She was also a member of the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners.

Senator Thompson received a bachelor of arts degree and master of arts degree in history from Creighton University. A passionate advocate for children and youth, she has worked diligently for major reforms in the state's juvenile justice system. She has also worked tirelessly on issues related to public health, youth violence and substance abuse prevention, and work force development.

Senator Thompson has been key supporter for UNO and CPACS in the Unicameral. In 2001, she led the fight to include funding for a new building for CPACS in the biennial budget. In 2002, Senator Thompson was pivotal in the creation of the Juvenile Justice Institute at UNO, which provides technical assistance, data collection support, and program-oriented research to the legislature and administrative agencies in the State of Nebraska.