

Mission

Our mission is to deliver practical,
person-centered strategies and services
that will strengthen and support
Ohio's elders and their communities.

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Governor John R. Kasich
Director Stephanie M. Loucka

Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame

May 18, 2017
Ohio Statehouse Atrium

Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame 2017 Inductees



**Paul R. and
Vera M. Allen**
Xenia



**Dr. Lucille Garber
Ford**
Ashland



**Dr. Ardath A.
Franck**
Akron



**Dorothy Madal
Hetzel**
Brecksville



**Samuel Joseph
Jones**
Glouster



**Betsy Ross
Koller**
Malta



**Melvyn J.
Stauffer, Esq.**
Sandusky

Welcome!

Since 1977, more than 450 individuals have been inducted into the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame, including Phyllis Diller, Bob Hope, John and Annie Glenn, Woody Hayes, Erma Bombeck and Paul Newman. The hall recognizes the many ways Ohio's elders are "Aging Out Loud" and continuing to grow, thrive and contribute throughout their lives. Its members are leaders, advocates and role models, and personify the many ways our elders are a crucial resource for our state, nation and beyond.

Leading our ceremony today are Stephanie M. Loucka, director of the Ohio Department of Aging, and Jacqi Bradley, director of the Area Agency on Aging 3 in Lima, Ohio, and immediate past president of the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

This year's inductees range in age from 73 - 95. Their stories are compelling and represent a lifetime of dedication, ingenuity, perseverance, kindness and compassion.



**Stephanie M.
Loucka**



**Jacqi
Bradley**

Paul R. and Vera M. Allen – Xenia



Paul R. and Vera M. Allen welcome everybody they meet with open arms and huge hearts. For 30 years, they were foster parents to more than 100 children, adopting seven of them along the way and raising one child of their own. The Allens loved them all, when no one else could.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen met in Louisiana during September 1952 and married a few weeks later. They dreamed of a family and soon were blessed with a daughter. They would only have the one biological child, but found a way to expand their family beyond their imaginings.

Beginning in 1972, the Allens opened their home and hearts to foster children in Green, Clark and Montgomery counties. The children came from different situations and environments. The Allens received calls at all hours of the day from caseworkers seeking a temporary safe place for a child. They fed them, clothed them, took them to church and gave them a stable and loving home.

Over the years, Mr. and Mrs. Allen became more involved in their community. In 1983, they opened a corner store in Xenia's East End, where they passed out school supplies to disadvantaged children. In 1985, Vera founded the annual community picnic in Xenia's Shawnee Park for the local children.



Mrs. Allen is the lead usher at the First Church of God. She has served as the national vice president of the Ushers for the First Church of God. She continues to train and mentor multiple generations of members of the church through ushering.

Mr. Allen is a Korean War Veteran and has worked in maintenance and security throughout his life. He is a former treasurer for the Greene County chapter of the NAACP, and delivers Meals on Wheels five days a week for Xenia Adult Recreation and Services Center.

The Allens feel they have been truly blessed by being able to serve. Mayor Marsha Bayless of Xenia declared the day of Mr. and Mrs. Allen's 60th wedding anniversary as "Paul and Vera Allen Day" to honor the couple for their service to the community.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen have always been modest people who were simply willing to share what they had with those in need. They have been pivotal parts of many lives – feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and loving those who have never felt it.

Of their children and grandchildren spread all over the country, Mrs. Allen said, "They call and write us, and they are the joy in our hearts. They help us as much by being who they are."



Dr. Lucille Garber Ford – Ashland



Dr. Lucille Garber Ford is a trailblazer and a role model for all women, with an accomplished career as an educator, businesswoman, college administrator and community leader.

Dr. Ford earned her associate's degree from Stephens College in Missouri and her bachelor's and master's degrees from Northwestern University, where she met her husband, Larry. After they married, she taught economics and business administration at Allegheny College and the University of Alabama.

In the 1960s, Dr. Ford was the first and only woman to serve on the Ohio Edison Company Board of Directors and was the first woman appointed to serve on a bank board for National City Bank. These appointments set the stage for other women to make their marks in business and finance.

When she was in her 40s, Dr. Ford earned her doctorate in economics from Case Western Reserve University. This degree was the foundation of her career at Ashland University, where she instructed more than 3,000 economics and business students. She designed the Gill Center for Business and Economic Education and was named the center's director in 1974.



Dr. Ford made history in 1978 when she became gubernatorial running mate to Ohio Speaker of the House of Representatives Charles Kurfess. She was the first woman to run for Lt. Governor in Ohio. The experience taught her to never say "no" to an opportunity to make a difference.

In 1979, Dr. Ford was named dean of the School of Business Administration, Economics and Radio/TV. In 1986, she became vice president of academic affairs, the nursing program, the writing center and the honors program. She became provost in 1990, and currently serves as provost emeritus, professor emeritus, and board of trustee emeritus.

Upon retiring from Ashland in 1995, Dr. Ford devoted her leadership skills to the Ashland County Community Foundation, where she served for 18 years.

Dr. Ford has her master's degree in pastoral counseling from Ashland Theological Seminary. She is an elder in the First Presbyterian Church in Ashland. She was inducted into the 2001 Ohio Women's Hall of Fame and was the Grand Marshal of the Ashland Bicentennial Parade in 2015.

Dr. Ford was married for 60 years and has two daughters, each of whom has earned doctorate degrees in their fields. She also has two granddaughters, who have themselves earned master's degrees. She is very grateful of the legacy she has formed with her family, her students and her contributions to the community.



Dr. Ardath A. Franck – Akron



To many of her former students, Dr. Ardath A. Franck is a beacon of hope. Throughout her 71-year career as a speech therapist, she was one of the first to use unconventional approaches to help students find success in reading.

Dr. Franck was born in Wehrum, PA, a now-vanished coal mining town. Her family moved to Ohio when she was one year old. Her father died when she was sixteen, and she helped raise her two youngest brothers. Despite adversity, her mother saw to it that she got a college education. She received her bachelor's degree from Kent State University in 1946, her master's degree from Kent State University in 1947, and her doctorate in speech therapy from Case Western Reserve University in 1956.

While in college, she noticed that many of the students who had success in speech therapy were behind in their reading skills. She studied existing remedial programs and developed her own experimental program to help students to catch up and eventually excel at reading. She tested her program with the Akron City Schools. When her approach proved itself, she established the Akron Speech and Reading Center.

Dr. Franck's program uses a different approach to learning. Students learn by watching filmstrips of children's stories and answering comprehension questions. On average, students improve their reading by two grade levels in just six months.



Dr. Franck has written numerous articles for the Wadsworth News Banner in which she offers advice to parents about educational issues. She published five years' worth of these articles in a book titled "Your Child Learns" in 1972.

Today, the Akron Speech and Reading Center is known as the Akron Education Campus, where Dr. Franck is director. At age 92, she provides individual preparation for GED classes, speed reading and remedial reading. She also tutors nurses and law students preparing for their board exams.

Five years ago, Dr. Franck conducted research at local nursing care facilities, held meetings with local senior citizens about senior activities, and created the Bath Citizens for Seniors group.

Dr. Franck was married to her husband Fred for 62 years until his passing in 2005. She raised two children and has five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, with another on the way.

When her daughter expressed an interest in baton twirling, Dr. Franck not only supported her, but also became a leader in the sport. She is currently president of Twirling Unlimited.

Dr. Franck believes the secret to a long, successful life is to stay grounded. "Start every day grateful for the time you have been given. Recognize your limitations, but use all the resources you have to be happy and pleasant to everyone you meet."



Dorothy Madal Hetzel – Brecksville



Seeing a larger-than-life Ginger Rogers dancing on the silver screen inspired a young Dorothy Madal Hetzel to make dancing her life's passion. For seven decades, she has taught and shared her love of dance in her home, her studio, dance halls and community theaters.

Ms. Hetzel began her dance career at age 18 and was first recognized for her gift by being voted "Best Dancer" in her high school yearbook. After graduation, she took a job in downtown Cleveland to pay for dance lessons at the Morganstern Dance Studio. Her studies soon began to pay her back when she began performing at the Brecksville Veteran's Hospital.

In 1962, as a young mother raising five children, she opened a dance studio in her home, teaching tap and ballet to neighborhood children. She later taught dance for five years in a Garfield Heights studio.

When Ms. Hetzel's husband passed away in 1993, a neighbor asked her to join the Garfield Heights Little Theater. Her first show as a dancer was "Me and My Girl," and she appeared in a dozen other shows, including "My Fair Lady," "Fiddler on the Roof" and "Guys and Dolls." She was asked to join the theater board as corresponding secretary and served as the board's vice president for 20 years.

In 1994, Ms. Hetzel became the choreographer and dance instructor at the Garfield Youth Theater. In 18 years, she choreographed 22 shows and produced 11 others.

In 1995 Ms. Hetzel was crowned "Ms. Ohio Senior America." At age 67, she began taking ballroom dancing lessons. She entered many competitions and won several first-place trophies and three plaques for Outstanding Student in Dance.



In 2001, when she was choreographing "Annie," she learned she had breast cancer. Continuing to choreograph shows and staying busy helped her get through the treatments. In 2015, her cancer returned. As before, she continued to teach and perform through her treatments for the young performers.

It makes her happy that she helped people develop their talent. "There are so many people that remember me as their dance instructor and the shows they have been in," she recalls.

While she counts her students as her children, Ms. Hetzel was blessed with a large family of her own. She raised three daughters and two sons, and has 10 grandchildren and one great granddaughter, who bring her much joy and happiness.

As for what keeps her going, Ms. Hetzel said, "If you have a talent, you can always keep it in your life. No matter how old you are, it will make you happy."



Samuel Joseph Jones – Glouster



For the better part of six decades, Samuel Joseph Jones has been training young people to be champions in and out of the ring. As a three-time National Kickboxing Champion, he has competed in matches around the world, including a nationally televised fight at Madison Square Garden. Since retiring from professional boxing, he has used his boxing experience to shape the minds and bodies of young athletes.

Mr. Jones' father opened the Glouster Boxing Club in 1936. Today, the club stands as Ohio's oldest gym. The younger Mr. Jones took over operations in 1960 while he was still competing professionally. He retired from competition in the late 1970s and began coaching children at the gym. Mr. Jones is happy to see students from challenging backgrounds engage in productive lives and go on to help in their communities.

Over the years, he has received notes, letters and emails from former students. "I'd like to say 'thanks' for making a difference in my life," one student, a high school junior, wrote. "Before I was boxing, I used to get in trouble at school most of the time, but I don't anymore."

With the help of family and community members, he created "Boxing for Books," an annual fundraiser for the Trimble Local Schools, which is considered among the most economically disadvantaged in the state. The event provides desperately needed supplies.



Since 2002, he and the Trimble Local Textbook and Supplies Foundation have raised more than \$600,000 from fundraisers, grants and donations to purchase textbooks, iPads and supplies for the Trimble School System. State education officials credit the up-to-date textbooks and technology for contributing to steady improvements in state proficiency tests scores for students in the region.

In 2002, Governor Bob Wise of West Virginia awarded Mr. Jones the Colombo-McConnell Memorial Award "in recognition for his outstanding achievements with youth." He was honored as the "Hometown Hero" in 2011 by the American Red Cross for his community service.

Mr. Jones has been married to his high-school sweetheart Ellen for 59 years. They raised three children, including one son they lost to MS and leukemia. They have five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He enjoys playing golf, watching sporting events, playing guitar, singing and visiting friends in nursing homes.

Remembering his chosen purpose and remaining engaged with his community keeps Mr. Jones positive. His message for everyone of every age is, "If you get knocked down in life, just get right back up and get in the game."



Betsy Ross Koller – Malta



If a picture is worth a thousand words, then Betsy Ross Koller's artwork would fill libraries. Her 18th-century Swiss style of painting is inspired by the Appalachian countryside of her youth and the places around the world where she has lived. She uses her talents to benefit various charity foundations and inspires others in the process.

Mrs. Koller began her college studies at Ohio University. During her junior year, she married her husband Paul and moved to Illinois, where he was employed. Shortly thereafter they transferred to Geneva, Switzerland, then Germany and Austria and back again to Geneva.

In Switzerland, Mrs. Koller attended art school to study a popular form of painting called naïve art. Her depictions of enchanting Alpine scenery mixed with Ohio rural settings and people reflect her life.

Mrs. Koller donates her artwork to help charities raise funds. When she was still an art student, UNICEF selected one of her winter scenes for their greeting card collection to raise funds to better children's lives worldwide. Her work has generated more than \$4 million for the charity.

She has also had commercial success with her art. Nestlé executives loved her whimsical, alpine scenery so much, they chose her paintings for *Cailler*, their premiere holiday chocolate line.



Mrs. Koller is creating four seasonal paintings for her alma mater, Ohio University. The university sells reproductions, greeting cards and other products bearing her images. The first two paintings, "Homecoming at Ohio University" and "Winter at Ohio University," have been well received, and she is working on the other two. The Ohio University Alumni Organization honored Mrs. Koller with the Honorary Alumna of the Year award in 2014.

Mrs. Koller grew up in southeastern Ohio, where her father was the local veterinarian. She would travel with him to area farms and ranches. These experiences exposed her to scenery that

is prevalent in her artwork, but it also gave her a deep reverence for the people in her community. "(Dad) had great respect for the tireless workers who made their livelihood from working the land."

She and her husband Paul reside in Florida. A recent fire in their garage and her studio, in which she lost all her finished pieces, works in progress and awards, has her reflecting on memories and the future. "Unless you have lived through a fire as devastating as this is, it is almost like losing a relative or friend. We intend to rebuild and to carry on." They have one son, Ross, and three grandchildren.



Mrs. Koller has lived according to her father's motto: "To receive, one has to give." Her artwork and her continuing philanthropy are her gifts to the world.

Melvyn J. Stauffer, Esq. – Sandusky



Melvyn J. Stauffer, Esq., improved his Sandusky, Ohio, community through his unique blend of strength, courage, wisdom and leadership. Law may be his profession, but his passion is helping the residents of his community be healthier, happier and prepared for their futures.

Mr. Stauffer was born in Brookville, Ohio. He graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1951. He immediately began practicing law in Sandusky with the law firm of Flynn, Py and Kruse and has practiced there his entire career.

In 1965, he led a group of interested citizens to create a Bowling Green State University (BGSU) branch campus in the Firelands region of north central Ohio. In 2011, he was awarded the Firelands Community Service Award for nearly 50 years of leadership and contributions.

Beginning in 1985, Mr. Stauffer was the architect of a strategic merger of Providence Hospital, Good Samaritan Hospital and Sandusky Memorial Hospital into the Firelands Regional Medical Center. Mr. Stauffer's ability to coordinate these institutions has led to advances in medical technology and higher quality of care. He served as a member of the board of directors for 44 years and is now director emeritus.



Mr. Stauffer continues to serve as a member of the Board of Directors of the Foundation for Firelands, which funds facilities expansion, new equipment purchases, and supports low or no cost community health and wellness outreach programs.

Mr. Stauffer also worked with Sam and Rose Stein to provide \$1 million from the Sam S. and Rose Stein Charitable Trusts to assist with the creation of Stein Hospice Service, Inc.

In 1995, Mr. Stauffer helped establish the Erie County Community Foundation. As president of the Dorn Foundation, he presented a challenge grant, offering \$1 million from the Dorn Foundation if corporations, individuals and private foundations in Erie County could collectively contribute another \$750,000. The challenge grant was a success. Mr. Stauffer is director emeritus of the foundation.

Under Mr. Stauffer's leadership, the Dorn Foundation has contributed millions of dollars to Sandusky and Erie counties, including a \$1 million grant to Sandusky Schools and a \$300,000 grant to the City of Sandusky.

Mr. Stauffer has also been involved in his church, the YMCA, and the local music and arts scene, and has been active in the Sandusky Jaycees, Sandusky Rotary and the Sandusky Lions Club.

Mr. Stauffer has been married to his wife Mary for 64 years. They have five children, 14 grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

Today, Mr. Stauffer stands as a shining example of the philanthropic spirit for others in his community.



Thank You

The Ohio Department of Aging would like to thank
Mrs. Ginni Ragan for her contribution to this event,
the Ohio General Assembly,
the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging and
Ohio's aging network professionals
for their dedicated service on behalf of Ohio's elders.