

WISCONSIN FAIR HOUSING NETWORK

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FOR RELEASE
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STATEWIDE FAIR HOUSING AWARDS PRESENTED

Fair Housing Awards were presented on Friday, April 25, 2014 during the Fair Housing Update and Awards Luncheon Program sponsored by the Wisconsin Fair Housing Network. The program was held at the Country Springs Hotel & Conference Center in Waukesha, Wisconsin. In addition to four Special Recognition Awards, three “in memoriam,” two fair housing awards were presented from among nominations submitted in response to a statewide solicitation to over 400 organizations.

A **Fair Housing Individual Professional Award** was presented to **Retired General Robert Cocroft, President and CEO of the Center for Veterans Issues**, headquartered in Milwaukee. General Robert Cocroft was recognized for his continued work with veterans in a civilian capacity after retiring from the military. He serves to help address veterans’ needs for housing and supportive services. The City of Milwaukee includes current and former military status as a protected basis under its fair housing ordinance. In addition, black veterans in particular make up a significant number of Milwaukee’s homeless population. He led the development of at least seven transitional and permanent supportive housing developments for veterans in **Milwaukee**, serving more than 170 individuals and families. He also expanded his efforts to address the affordable housing needs of homeless veterans and others with 34 units in **Racine** and 50 units of permanent supportive housing to be opened later in **Green Bay**.

A **Fair Housing Individual Professional Award** was presented to **Kathy Flores, Diversity Coordinator for the City of Appleton**. Ms. Flores was recognized for her work in addressing one of the impediments identified in the city’s fair housing analysis. The city had identified, as victims of housing discrimination, persons who consider themselves as a gender other than how they were biologically born. Such individuals are reported to have twice the rate of homelessness and experience discrimination in every aspect of their lives in whatever community they live. The city’s fair housing ordinance did not include protection from discrimination based on gender identity. Ms. Flores initiated an effort to have it amended. As a result of her commitment in working with other stakeholders, “gender identity and/or gender expression” has been included as a protected basis in Appleton’s fair housing ordinance, adopted unanimously by the Appleton City Council in August 2013.

Three **Special Recognition Fair Housing Awards** were awarded “in memoriam,” to **Adolph “Pappy” Arms, Karen Avery and Rev. Dr. James G. White**. All passed away in 2013.

“Pappy Arms” was one of the first designated marshals whose job was to shield and protect from violence fair housing marchers in 1967, led by Father James Groppi. **Karen Avery** advanced disability rights in housing through her work for Madison and Milwaukee fair housing councils and IndependenceFirst, Inc. **Dr. James E. White** made significant contributions to housing and community development in Milwaukee’s Historic Harambee neighborhood and affordable housing opportunities in Racine.

A **Special Recognition Fair Housing Award** was also presented to **Jean Lamers of Fond du Lac**, past Co-Chairperson of the Wisconsin Fair Housing Network, for her many years of service in advancing and organizing fair housing training, education and information programs, locally and statewide.

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