

8th Annual Together We Can Child Advocate Awards

The legal and social work fields lost two people who were incredibly strong advocates for children. We have chosen to honor Catherine Lafleur and Linda Christmas with awards within their areas of service each year. Both embodied the love, the passion and determination needed to be a very special advocate for children. We hope you will consider nominating someone special for the 2015 awards. The criteria for nominees are on page 2.

Catherine Lafleur
Legal Advocacy for Children & Families Award

Linda Christmas
Service to Children and Families Award

NOMINATION FORM FOR THE TOGETHER WE CAN HONOR AWARDS

Eligibility:

- Individuals serving children and families - voluntary, employed or retired.
- TWC Sponsoring Organization Leaders/Agency/Department Chairs not eligible
- Must not have been a previous TWC Child Advocate Award Winner

Nominating Someone for: (Please check one) Catherine Lafleur Award Linda Christmas Award

Nominator Name: _____ Phone: _____

Connection to Nominee: _____

Nominee: _____

Nominee's Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: LA Zip Code: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

Email: _____

Are you going to try to surprise the winner and have a plan to make sure they attend? Yes No

Please submit [this form and a one-page narrative](#) describing the nominee and how they fit the award criteria. You may fax in the form if you choose—[remember to include the narrative page](#). Fax to: 1-985-778-0058

Mail to: TWC Conference Awards
C/O Team Dynamics LLC
2444 Rue Weller
Mandeville, LA 70448

**Nominations must be postmarked
by September 8, 2015**



Decisions will be made by the TWC Steering Committee members. All decisions are final. The award recipient is expected to attend the Together We Can conference awards evening to receive the award. It will be presented on Wednesday, October 14th in Lafayette. The awards evening will be held at Vermilionville. Maps will be sent to award recipients.

Together We Can Awards

Catherine Lafleur

Legal Advocacy for Children & Families

Criteria:

- Long term commitment to improving the lives of children
- Exemplifies high levels of ethics and respect for the child welfare and legal systems
- Personal strengths make him/her an effective child advocate
- Demonstrates exceptional diligence, thoroughness and persistence in:
 - Making the system respond to the needs of the child
 - Promoting and supporting the use of innovative and creative approaches to systemic problems
 - Conducting research
 - Representing the best interest of the child

Linda Christmas

Service to Children and Families

Criteria:

- Long term commitment to the community - passionate and energetic in their role
- Understanding and commitment to the "creating a village" concept
- Demonstrates outstanding leadership - takes risks to achieve outstanding results
- Contributes to a positive image for the children and families - celebrates the family
- Serves as a role model or mentor in the community and with families
- Demonstrates initiative in heightening community awareness of the issues facing abused and neglected children

In Loving Memory, a Tribute:

An Introduction to Catherine Lafleur

One day shortly after Cathy was diagnosed with cancer; my brother encountered an old black man and his wife on the sidewalk in front of her house. They told him that they were there to see if there was any way they could help Miss Cathy. She had apparently done some work in their behalf and they had no money, had WALKED from downtown because they couldn't afford the streetcar. But, they would do anything they could to help her because she had helped them when nobody else would. Perhaps that is why she worked as an advocate for children; because she felt not many people would. Cathy did not have any children of her own so, she was excited when she became a guardian for one of her clients. She said, "I finally have a child." When you asked about the photos of children in her home, many of them were her clients. She enjoyed working for the children. She saw the need to represent those who could not fight for themselves and were often over looked. Yes, it was heart-breaking at times and difficult. However, she felt it was important that children have a voice. What ever the reason, she enjoyed this work the most. She never spoke much about her work, and it wasn't until she became ill that we learned about what she did and how the legal community felt about her work. All of Cathy's siblings want to thank you for honoring her in this way, and we hope that the recipient of this award carries on her legacy by acting as a voice for children.

—Nina Plauche, Cathy's sister

An Introduction to Linda Christmas

Linda Christmas served children in many ways and she will be always be remembered as one who firmly believed in the value of family. Growing up she was active with her church, sang in the choir and served as a youth delegate. Linda was an honor graduate of Southern University in Baton Rouge and earned Master's Degrees in English from Southern University and Iowa State University. She completed Doctoral Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in Sociolinguistics. Linda's lifetime was filled with a wide range of professional experiences that touched many lives. Her most recent role was that of Project Administrator for the ULM Region IX Foster/Adoptive Family Project. She also served as Associate Professor at Grambling State University; a homebound teacher in Natchitoches Parish school system; technical assistant with the Friends of the Family in Baltimore; project director of the Youth Multi-Service Center in St. Thomas (U.S. Virgin Islands); and Information Specialist with the Pennsylvania Dept. of Education. Widely traveled, she shared her skills and talents with people in a variety of places and settings. She served her community as a grant writer, having written many grants for groups and most recently serving the Universal Blossoming of the Aged. Linda piloted and conducted many programs for parents and was very supporting in the formation and development of the Ouachita/Caldwell Foster Parent Association.