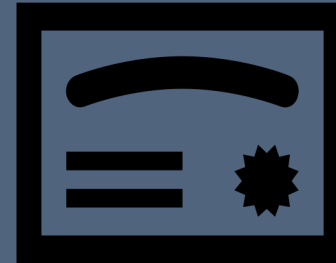


IAD 2023 Awards

Springfield, IL
June 30 – July 1, 2023





Meritorious Service Award Maria Hernandez

We are honored to present the Meritorious Service Award to Maria Hernandez for her unlimited commitment to the deaf Latino communities as well as other organizations. She has been tirelessly advocating and continues to do so.

Thank you, Maria, for your efforts and your positive thinking!

Presented by Raymond Francini



Meritorious Service Award Bridget Lemus

Bridget Lemus, a Chicagoan, is a social media influencer with over 148,000 followers across her social media accounts. She is a content creator who shares her experience as a deaf person to spotlight American Sign Language, share the beauty of deaf culture, and raise awareness of deaf community accessibility and issues.

Bridget uses the power of her social media platform to connect, collaborate, and create with other influencers. Bridget is not just a content creator. She is a storyteller, an influencer, an activist, an entrepreneur, and a proud mom.

You can discover more about Bridget Lemus and the inspiring content she created and shop at her online shop by going to <https://linktr.ee/deaffamilymatters>

Presented by Raymond Francini



2023 Youth Leadership Award Antonia Phillips from Alton

Youth Leadership Award: Awarded to individuals between the ages of 14-28 years old whose dedication, vision and leadership have made a difference in the deaf community.

This year's winner is a young lady who has consistently broken the glass ceiling in various ways. She is a Deaf wrestler who has wrestled against hearing wrestlers and beat them. She has wrestled male wrestlers and beat them.

Not only that, she participated in the first ever female state wrestling tournament and was the champion in her weight class. She has defied all odds and is an incredible role model as a young Deaf woman.

Presented by Fara Harper

Michael Berger Presidential Award Fara Harper

The Michael Berger Presidential Award was presented by Marietta Coufal in recognition of this person's exceptional leadership and outstanding efforts in hosting the Illinois Association of the Deaf Biennial's first conference after the challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The unwavering commitment, resilience, and dedication have ensured the success of this milestone event, bringing our community together and paving the way for a brighter future.

Especially for the past two days with the terrible storm that passed through Thursday afternoon! The IAD Presidential Award goes to Fara Harper!



Presented by
Marietta Coufal



Fara and her supportive family!

Lowell Myers Advocacy Award

Jacksonville Area Center for Independent Living

The advocacy award is named after Lowell Myers. He was a deaf lawyer from Illinois who defended Donald Lang, a black deaf with limited language man accused of murder. Lowell Myers fought, fought, and fought even though he faced barriers himself as a lawyer and the equal rights for Donald Lang. He won!

The case of Donald Lang changed our court system. The court began to look into how we can better serve non-English speaking people, people with limited language expressive and understanding, and sign language in our court system to ensure that all of them receive a fair trial by having effective and accessible communication.

The award goes to the organization of the person with a disability. The organization works so hard to ensure accessibility and accommodations for others. When the money is tight, the organization never reduces or cuts the money that pays for reasonable accommodations. The organization makes accessibility available anytime, anywhere, so that the person with a disability doesn't have to make a request. That is awesome!



Paul Pyers accepted the award for JCIL

Presented by Joe Vieira



Spirit of IAD Award Donald Moore

Spirit of IAD: Awarded to an individual member of IAD who carries the spirit of IAD in all levels of their work, demonstrating exemplary commitment, dedication and service.

This year's winner is someone I couldn't have done this conference without. He has been working with me, being creative and has exceeded my expectations. I wouldn't have been able to get out all the conference information without his work. Even though I knew he has been busy with work and life, he has never dropped the ball and has kept me on my toes.

We cannot tell you how much we appreciate this person, and I, Fara Harper, am honored to award the 2023 Spirit of IAD to Donald Moore, our Media Specialist.



IAD JB & Beatrice Davis Award Darci Zook

Our 2023 IAD JB & Beatrice Davis Award winner is someone who has a lot going on with her life but has always been ready to help out as needed. She was the one who assumed the heavy responsibility when no one wanted to run as an officer until we were able to establish a tentative board.

During that transition, this person has been patient with us, helping us learn the ropes with various programs that IAD used. IAD was able to thrive because of her and we owe her a great debt of gratitude.

Not only that, but she has also been a great advocate for the deaf community, especially for concerts. She usually ensures that interpreters are there to ensure accessibility for deaf attendees.

She also goes out to support deaf events or small businesses owned by deaf. Our award winner is Darci Zook, a former IAD secretary.

Thank you Darci and congratulations!

Congratulations to the 2023 Award Winners!

Be sure to congratulate the award
winners in-person or on-line

