

2005

Sister Ruth Heaney OSB, Columbia Missouri received the Elaine Aber Humanitarian Award in recognition of her work in Criminal Justice. After her husband passed and her children were grown, Sr. Ruth joined the Benedictine Sisters in 1974. Through the Benedictine community's mission and work she began serving some of the most forgotten people – prisoners in Missouri's jails. She was founder of Agape House, a shelter in Jefferson City for families of prisoners while visiting their loved ones. People who work with her experience her dedication, compassion, and willingness to fight for the right of the inmates. She has made numerous trips to talk with legislators on prison issues and never let 'no' stop her as she fought for justice for every single person.

Ann Morris, Southwest Center for Independent Living, Springfield Missouri received the Herman and Dorothy Johnson Award - Ms. Morris has served as the Director for the Southwest Center since 1986. Under her leadership the center began in a small office with two staff persons and has moved four times increasing much needed space and personnel. They currently are housed in a new 9,600 sq.ft. building and employ 18 persons. A longtime member of the local Springfield Chapter of MASW, she served as the treasurer for many years. She has held key positions in several organizations including the National Council for Independent Living, the Statewide Independent Living Council, HEAT Program, and Para-transit Ridership Determination Committee in Springfield. She has spent many hours traveling between Springfield and Jefferson City to advocate for the disabled and disability rights for Southwest Missourians. She is a strong supporter in Springfield of all civil rights and serves as an example for all MASW members.