

**MASW---CHAMPIONING AND FURTHERING THE
CAUSE**

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As you can well imagine, Bill and I are deeply moved by this lovely recognition. Especially since it comes from an organization whose mission has been central to our lives for decades.

Thinking about this evening has given us great pause---We have talked about the paths we, as a couple and as individuals, have taken over the years---and why. What exactly prompted us to invest our time and our hopes with this particular organization?

We came to realize that we saw this organization as a valid way to help find sustainable solutions-- from time to time-- for many of the human issues confronting the citizens of our state. And that those issues, in many cases, dovetailed with passions in our own lives where we hoped to help level the playing fields.

Additionally, we also knew that to be effective —relevant issues needed to be well researched and still further--- required the leverage of a credible champion organization whose voice would be heard and respected in raising the bar .

Our conclusions led us to MASW----generally for four central, overarching reasons----

- ***First***--We believe that MASW is an organization that truly changes lives and positively affects major populations by taking courageous stands on many of the vital issues facing Missourians;
- ***Second***---Its' organizational structure has enabled the grassroots voices to be heard and become an identifiable presence in making social justice decisions which could then be turned into policy;
- ***Third***---The organization has a highly regarded ethical presence in the state capitol thru its effective professional staff. They labor with courage and conviction providing

information on issues of interest to the public and to elected officials;

- ***Finally***---The local chapters are places to learn, to grow, to advocate and to serve. It is here that community building occurs and where we gather to pursue common goals and seek diversity;

The historians in our midst who have chronicled MASW's legislative record must unabashedly agree that this organization has been "on the right side of the coin" for 110+ years. This history validates the organization's moral positions:

- Challenging systems of oppression
- Upholding dignity
- Infusing educated wisdom into human affairs
- Thinking collaboratively
- Using leverage to support the common good

So for Bill and for me, this, our journey with MASW to date (and it shall continue) has made us immeasurably proud to have been a small part of it all. We have shared this path with many in the world of today and we recognize and applaud MASW's ongoing accomplishments.

We also acknowledge the value of those before us who for over a century led the way and who undauntedly dealt with the issues of their time. —And so it is the collective “US” who have:

- engineered the roads across rough waters
- built the bridges of inclusion
- pushed the boundries of disparities
- And in doing so, have created a solid reputation for effective action;
- Making this bottom up system of ours, come alive, take shape and become validated and respected.

But, in MASW, as in all learning organizations, we are:

- continually evolving,
- remaining sensitive --with a listening ear to those who speak from experience and to those who advocate for those unable to speak for themselves;
- and , finally, MASW, by steadfastly continuing to create an environment with an *open door* to those with *open minds* and *open hearts* shall in the end---help give rise to a healthier, well educated, participatory and more responsive community.

It is a given that MASW's values are more needed today than ever before. For these reasons—and, --oh, so many more—Bill and I are deeply grateful for being able to share portions of this worthy journey beside you. You make us all stand tall.

Mary Kay McPhee and Bill Pfeiffer

August 10, 2011