

TIME OF YOUR LIFE

Digest



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Aging Commissioner honored with Geri

By Janet Stidman Eveleth

When Dr. Frances Bond was inducted into the Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame in October, she was also honored with the Hall of Fame's esteemed Geri Award for her exemplary volunteer contributions to society. A member of the Baltimore County Commission on Aging, Fran is a former teacher, college professor, associate dean and education administrator who is an outstanding volunteer devoted to community service and to helping others, especially senior citizens.

The Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame (SCHF) honors Maryland senior citizens age 65+ who have made exemplary contributions to society. Every year a number of seniors are nominated for their outstanding volunteer civic and humanitarian contributions that make a difference in the lives of Marylanders, yet only 50 seniors are inducted into the SCHF annually.

SCHF's highest honor, the prestigious GERI Award, is only bestowed on five truly outstanding Maryland seniors and Fran Bond was one of them for 2018. According to the SCHF "as the arts and sciences have their Grammy, Emmy, Tony, and Oscar awards, so do the senior citizens of Maryland have their GERI, the geriatric 'Nobel Prize' for extraordinary humanitarian community service."

"Fran is most deserving of the Geri Award because of the magnitude of all she gives back to the community,"



Fran Bond accepts the Geri award for volunteers at the Hall of Fame Luncheon. Photo courtesy of Jim Fennessey.

proclaims Joanne Williams, former Director of the Department of Aging.

"I was very surprised," exclaims Fran, an 85-year-old grandmother of eight grandchildren. "I am quite honored to receive this award. But I just see my volunteer work as a part of my life."

"I believe volunteering should be an everyday part of our life experiences," admits this humble Geri

Award winner. "I don't see what I did as heroic or beyond. I think this is the way we should all think about helping one another, that it should be a part of our life's work."

"At the awards ceremony all of my children and grandchildren were there and said 'Oh Granny this is so awesome.' But I told them to think about community service not as

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County Executive Johnny Olszewski Jr. is inaugurated. p. 6



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Commissioner recognized for good works in County

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anything special but as something we should all be striving to do.”

Fran has enjoyed an illustrious career blending her professional life with community service to help others. She began her career teaching kindergarten. “I always liked working with young children and loved teaching, so I became a kindergarten teacher. It was one of the best parts of all of my careers.”

She earned a BA and MS in Education from Towson University and a Ph.D. in Human Development, Guidance and Counseling and Research Methodology from the University of Maryland. “I worked at Towson for 32 years, as a kindergarten teacher at its elementary school, a college professor and an Associate Dean in the College of Education.” She was also Chairperson of the University’s Early Childhood Department.

“Fran is an outstanding educator at heart,” declares Joanne. “She is an educator by profession with her background and all of her degrees and has served on the adjunct faculty at Stevenson and Towson Universities. Fran is a strong advocate of early childhood education programs and has done a lot of consulting work in the area of professional development for educational administrators working with children programs.”

After leaving Towson, Fran joined the Peace Corps as Associate Director of its Fellows Program for five years, helping returning volunteers get a Masters’ degree while working in underserved communities. In 1999 she received a Presidential appointment as Special Assistant to the U.S. Secretary of Education and traveled across the country promoting early education for two years, then served as the Director of Professional Development for PBS’ children program *Ready To Learn*.

Today Fran serves an educational consultant giving presentations to senior groups and writing articles on grandparenting. An active volunteer all

of her life, Fran has always given back to her community, generously sharing her time, talents and expertise.

Bond’s outreach to all

Her long list of volunteer pursuits include working in her church in a number of capacities and heading the School Sisters of Notre Dame human trafficking program in Maryland. She also collected clothes for the victims too. Fran also created, wrote, filmed and coordinated *First Steps*, a series of 30 childhood video programs for parents, with the Baltimore County schools and then a second series on parent/children conferences.

“I have always done a lot of volunteer work at Towson University,” she adds, “and I am currently President of the University’s Retired Faculty Association. Towson University is still very much a part of my life.”

“I am also very involved in the Department of Aging,” Fran continues. “I have appeared on numerous ‘*Time of Your Life*’ television programs, written many articles on grandparenting for the *Time of Your Life Digest* and regularly visit the county’s senior centers to teach classes on grandparenting.”

“I think grandparents play such an important role in their grandchildren’s lives. I think it has to start when the child is young with open communication and trust. We can do so much as models for our grandchildren.” Fran is very close to her eight grandchildren and is very involved in their lives.

In 2015, Fran received an Executive appointment to the Baltimore County Commission on Aging, the advisory board to the County’s Department of Aging. “Our team of 14 Commissioners help us stay on top of the trends our Department should be focusing on,” explains Joanne, who was the former head of the Department.

“Fran and our other Commissioners are out in the community as the eyes and the ears of older adults,” adds Joanne. “They have their fingers

on the pulse of what older adults are looking for and concerned about and want us to address. As a Commissioner, Fran is an advocate who comes to the table with suggestions on how to improve the quality of life for older adults in Baltimore County.”

“Fran has chosen to give back and share her expertise and knowledge to help others as a volunteer,” concludes Joanne. “She is a very fine example of someone who has been able to do this and set an example for others to follow.”

“As long as God gives me the strength,” Fran promises, “I will continue to work with others and be a role model for my grandchildren.”