

2 nd CD LEGACY AWARD NOMINEE	COUNTY PARTY	COUNTY CHAIR
Christopher Crain	Wexford	William Allen
Paula Jo (PJ) Meyers	Wexford	William Allen
Kitty Hagerman	Mason	Liz Kannon
Jim Martin	Mason	Liz Kannon
Michelle Ross	Newaygo	Stan Opal
Stan Opal	Newaygo	Newaygo Party
Michael Fields	Gladwin	Duane Miller
Jesse Iliff-List	Mecosta	Karen Greenbay/Tracy Ruell
Mark Bloxsom	Mescosta	Karen Greenbay/Tracy Ruell
Stan Opal	Osceola	Tracy Busch
Karen Turnbull	Osceola	Tracy Busch
Caroline DeGraaf	Gratiot	Christine Freestone
Arthur Faustmann	Gratiot	Christine Freestone
Judy Cunningham	Manistee	John Helge
Eric Lampinen	Manistee	John Helge

Nominee Name: Christopher Crain

County Party: Wexford County

Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy Award

Nomination Statement:

Christopher Crain, a steadfast resident of Wexford County, traces his family lineage in the area to the 19th century. In his formative years, the son and grandson of UAW tradespeople were profoundly influenced by his family's values of hard work, justice, equality, and patriotism. These principles were further reinforced during his early adulthood while he served as a paratrooper in the US and overseas. His foreign service exposed him to stark social inequality and systematic human rights violations, which profoundly impacted his life's trajectory. After spending some time as a

security consultant specializing in high-threat mitigation, Christopher determined that he needed to return to academia to understand systematic inequality, its origins, and its propagation, culminating in earning his Doctorate in Anthropology from the College of William & Mary. During this time, he gained several critical theoretical tools that have helped him maximize his focus and dedication to social justice and equality. This dedication to social justice is a belief and a way of life. It has led to an ever-growing engagement in public action involving his local government, grassroots organizing for social change, and an evolving dedication to the Wexford County Democratic Party. Chris is actively involved in his local township government, attending public sessions, consulting its elected officials, and advocating for others on the community's current issues. Years of these efforts led to earning the respect of local officials and his appointment to the township's planning commission. He is also involved in a grassroots organization that provides aid to the less fortunate in the region. Recent work with Amanda Siggins and the Traverse City Housing Justice Team in Grand Traverse County has been instrumental in raising awareness about the urgent issues of homelessness, rent stability, and housing availability. This awareness has been instrumental in significant regional changes and, with other like-minded organizations, has led to victories in Lansing that benefit all Michiganders. In addition, since helping Amanda Siggins with her campaign and running for State Representative himself in Michigan's 101st District, he has expanded his involvement with the Wexford County Democratic Party, proudly serving on the County Committee and as chair of Candidate Recruitment and Development. He intends to use these foundations for further coordinated action to generate future progressive change for his local community, the party, and all the people of Michigan.

Nomination by Bill Allen

Nominee Name: Paula Jo (PJ) Meyers

County Party: Wexford County

Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy

Award

Nomination Statement:

Nomination of Paula Jo (Pj.) Meyers, Vice Chair Wexford County
Democratic Party

I am writing in support of the nomination of Paula Meyers.

Born and raised most of her young life in Michigan, Paula decided after a few years of college to pack her bags and throw caution to the wind and move to Boston. The Viet Nam conflict was still raging and protests were what drew her and kept her among like minded people in the East. Roll the calendar forward a few decades and from one coast to the next, she felt the pull of the Great Lakes and again, like minded people who know what it means to put in an honest days' work. Earning a Bachelor's from International University in San Diego with a degree in Psychology, she then completed her student teaching at WMU. Hired by Cadillac in 1985, she taught 4/5th grades, team teaching most of the years and focusing on Social Studies and Language Arts. Always active as a MEA union representative for her respective elementary schools, she gained the respect of her fellow teachers and became the union president of Cadillac Area Public Schools. At that time I believe we had 225+ on the teaching staff. Always willing to learn, she attended numerous MEA conferences and in fact, presented many sessions along with Kay Walker Telma, then Traverse City's Union President, now the MEA-Retired President. Also, due to her love of History, she is published in Social Studies Education at the elementary level for the State of Michigan. Fast forward to January of 2024, she graciously accepted the position of Vice Chair of the Wexford County Dems. She often jokes that together we are the Ying/Yang that drives this group forward with gusto. I can honestly say that over the 16 months she has literally sacrificed her time and energy without a hint of necessary recognition solely for the purpose of the election of Democrats and pushing forward to make this group what it has become today. Like so many of us, I don't believe I need to reiterate what we ALL have given, both personally and financially to the cause

that we hold so dear...our dignity and the dignity of all. In closing, let me simply say that she is a work horse that gives it her all 100 % of the time and is more than deserving of your considerations.

Bill Allen, WCDP Chair

Nominee Name: Kitty Hagerman

County Party: Mason County Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy Award

Nomination Statement:

For her years of Service to the Democratic Party, Kitty served as Vice Chair of Mason County Democratic Party, Finding and Staffing Office Space, Fundraising, often Chairing Events, Bottle and Can Return, Speaker Committee, Friday Evening Movie Night, Friday Night Live, Producing Posters and Signs for FNL and Office, Fourth of July Parade - Decorating, Walking and Riding, Participated in Rallies, Conventions, Corn Roast and Trivia Events.

Nominee Name: Jim Martin

County Party: Mason County Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy Award

Nomination Statement:

For his years of service to the Democratic Party, Jim along with Lynn Gerould introduced Discussion time in our General Membership meetings which ultimately led to our meeting format change. He participated with returning Cans and bottles. While part of the Membership committee he personally contacted and reached out to

members and former members. Assisted with letter Writing and Calling for Candidates

Nominated by

Liz Kannon, Mason County Chair

Nominee Name: Michelle Ross

County Party: Newaygo County

Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy

Award

Nomination Statement:

Nomination for Michelle Ross of Newaygo County. Shelly works hard as the finance committee chair and makes sure ALL of our events are profitable and fun. Without her,,,, NCDP would be greatly diminished in what we do.

Nominated by Stan Opal, Chair Newaygo County

Nominee Name: Michael Fields

County Party: Gladwin County

Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy

Award

Nomination Statement:

The Gladwin County Democratic Party would like to nominate Michael Fields.

Michael has stepped up and provided leadership to our local party as Chair and served for 5 years from 2020 - 2024. Under his leadership we have established a Party Headquarters and office in downtown Gladwin and provided services and meeting space to our county party for our monthly meetings and speakers. He helped us establish a quarterly newsletter that goes out to over 600 county residents.

Michael's leadership for the party has extended far beyond our local party. He has served on the Michigan Democratic Rural Caucus and as Chair of it's Rural PAC.

We are so grateful to him, and the sacrifice of time and energy he has given to move us forward in these difficult times.

Duane Miller, Chair

Gladwin County Democratic Party

989-802-2024

Nominee Name: Jesse Iliff- List

County Party: Mecosta County

Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy

Award

Nomination Statement:

Mecosta County Democrats recognize and nominate Jessie Iliff-List and Mark Bloxsom for our Legacy Award Nominations.

Jessie's unwavering commitment to democracy and Democratic values is evident in her tireless work. She has dedicated years to knocking on thousands of doors, advocating for candidates and initiatives. As a volunteer for Voters Not Politicians, she played a crucial role in gathering signatures for the initiative that curbed Republican gerrymandering. A devoted member of the Rural Caucus, Jessie actively participates in 2nd Congressional District efforts and regularly attends Democratic conventions. She is a fierce advocate for clean water, air, and a healthy environment. As a former teacher and proud member of the MEA, she stands firmly in support of unions and their historic contributions to

workers' rights.

The Mecosta County Democratic party is blessed to have such a kind, hardworking and dedicated volunteer as Jessie Iliff-List.

Nominee Name: Mark Bloxsom

County Party: Mecosta County
Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy
Award

Nomination Statement:

Mark is a dedicated Democrat with deep roots in political activism. Having spent his early years working behind the scenes on campaigns, he remains an unwavering champion of democracy. Whether attending protests, supplying equipment for headquarters, or stepping up for any task the local party needs, Mark is always ready to serve.

Every year, he generously sets up and breaks down the fair booth, ensuring a strong presence for the party. He has a keen eye for leadership, often identifying promising candidates and persuading them to run for office. His connections and vast political experience have been invaluable.

The Mecosta County Democratic Party is fortunate to have a person who is always ready to say "yes" and stand up for what's right.

Respectfully,

Karen Greenbay and Tracy Ruell

Nominee Name: Stan Opal

County Party: Newaygo County
Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy
Award

Nomination Statement:

Newaygo County, male nomination

Stan opal has been an active and loud member of the Newaygo dems for over 6 years! He helps with every major event we have! He bartends our fundraising dinners, pulls our floats in the parades and now has become our chairperson,he is also an active volunteer for numerous city and countywide causes, as well as having been a candidate for County Commissioner in the past and a Gov Whitmer appointee. Stan is truly an upstanding citizen deserving of this honor

He closes every night of our texas holdem,then donates the money right back to the party.

He deserves to be our nominee for the legacy dinner!!!

(BTW,, this was voted on,, not my idea)

The Newaygo County Democratic party would like to nominate Stanley Opal as our Legacy Honoree for 2025. Not only is Stan our local party Chair, he is also an active volunteer for numerous city and countywide causes, as well as having been a candidate for County Commissioner in the past. Stan is truly an upstanding citizen deserving of this honor.

Nominee Name: Stan Opal

County Party: Osceola County
Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy
Award

Nomination Statement:

Stan Opal

I would like to nominate Stan Opal for the 2nd CD Legacy Award. Stan stood with the Osceola County Democratic Party from our moment of inception. He made a personal donation to the ice cream social that we organized on

September 23, 2023. This event brought over 30 people into the doors of the Reed City Depot. Most of the Osceola County Democrats who arrived that day believed that maybe five people would show up. The energy in the room was extraordinary when they walked into to room and saw how many we were. Not only was our Party reborn, but a belief that we could tip the balance towards Democratic candidates came into focus. This is the kind of magic that Stan makes. At various events, I have noticed how welcoming and supportive he is, especially towards people of color and the LGBTQ+ community. Stan is a bold and brave Democrat in red and reactionary West Central Michigan and inspires us all.

Nominated by Tracy Busch

Nominee Name: Karen Turnbull

County Party: Osceola County

Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy

Award

Nomination Statement:

Karen Turnbull

I would also like to nominate Karen Turnbull for the 2nd CD Legacy Award. Karen was there with me on the ground level in reconstituting the Osceola County Democratic Party. Early in the summer of 2023, Karen reached out to me and expressed a willingness to help me bring our county Dem Party back after its dissolution in 2014. I liked the idea but was daunted by all the organizational hoops and procedures. I also had no idea how to reach out to local Democrats. Karen plugged me into Mary Minnick, Michael Fields, and Peggy Raddatz. The Ice Cream Social that they helped me to organize brought our Party back to life. Our Party owes Karen Koester Turnbull a debt of gratitude. She continues to come to our meetings and has many, many words of support. She is proud of what we have accomplished but never takes credit for it. I'd like this award to give her the credit that is due.

Nominated by Tracy Busch

Nominee Name: Caroline DeGraaf

County Party: Gratiot County Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy Award

Nomination Statement:

The Gratiot County Democratic Party proudly nominates Caroline DeGraaf for the 2nd Congressional District's Legacy Award in recognition of her extraordinary volunteer service and leadership. Caroline has served as our Membership Chairperson for the past four years, during which time she has transformed the scope and reach of our organization. Thanks to her organizational expertise, creative outreach strategies, and deep commitment to community engagement, our membership has grown from approximately 20 members to a mailing list of over 480 individuals—a growth of more than 2,300%. Her work has revitalized our local party and brought new levels of energy and involvement from across the county. Caroline's dedication goes far beyond managing membership records. She is a consistent presence at all of our events—typically the first to arrive and the last to leave—ensuring everything runs smoothly. She represents us in the Gratiot Community Chamber of Commerce and plays a central role in planning and executing our participation in chamber-sponsored events throughout the county. Caroline also serves as our communications lifeline, keeping members and supporters connected through regular emails and text updates. Her impact is felt in every aspect of our operations, and she is deeply respected and appreciated by all of us. Caroline exemplifies the spirit of this award, and we wholeheartedly support her nomination.

Nominee Name: Arthur Faustmann

County Party: Gratiot County Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy Award

Nomination Statement:

The Gratiot County Democratic Party is honored to nominate Arthur Faustmann for the 2nd Congressional District's Legacy Award in recognition of his tireless dedication, behind-the-scenes leadership, and invaluable contributions to our year-round office and community presence. As our Office Manager, Arthur was the driving force behind the opening of our office five years ago. With unmatched commitment and care—alongside the support of his equally dedicated wife, Renee—Arthur painted, decorated, organized, and furnished the space, transforming it into a welcoming and professional environment that garners praise from all who visit. His handyman skills, meticulous attention to detail, and deep dedication to Democratic values have made our office the operational and symbolic heart of our local party.

Arthur brings more than just skills—he brings spirit. A beloved retired elementary school teacher from Alma Public Schools, Arthur is known across the community for his kindness, warmth, and engaging personality. He is the first to welcome newcomers, invite friends to events, and make everyone feel at home. Before and after every meeting or event, he ensures the space is spotless and fully prepared, often working quietly behind the scenes to make sure everything runs smoothly. A true servant leader, Arthur exemplifies what it means to live out Democratic values in both word and action. We are incredibly proud to call him one of our own and wholeheartedly recommend him for the Legacy Award.

Nominee Name: Judy Cunningham

County Party: Manistee County

Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy Award

Nomination Statement:

Judy Cunningham has been the treasurer of the Manistee County Democratic Party since 2019. She has successfully and consistently complied with state election financial reporting requirements as well as

providing detailed monthly reports to the Executive Committee and our membership. She has been a trusted steward of the more than \$75,000 in annual donations to the MCDP. Judy has also stepped up as chairperson of the Candidate Recruiting and Support Committee and has successfully recruited more candidates for down ballot offices than ever before in Manistee County. She has recently volunteered to be the point person for organizing weekly protests and demonstrations against the chaos, corruption and cruelty of the Trump regime that have engaged over 700 voters in Manistee County.

Nominee Name: Eric Lampinen

County Party: Manistee County

Democratic Party

Award: 2nd Congressional District Legacy
Award

Nomination Statement:

Eric Lampinen has been a faithful and consistent supporter of Democratic Party principles and democracy in Manistee County. During each election cycle Eric has led a team of volunteers that have erected and recovered over 50 large campaign signs on major highways in Manistee County. Eric serves as a member of the MCDP Membership committee where his computer skills are put to use, ensuring we have up-to-date information on our members to better utilize their skills as volunteers. Eric is a master at utilizing VAN and has helped many of our local and regional candidates use this tool to focus their campaign efforts. Eric can always be counted on to step up and take on any task to help our county party. He has been instrumental in helping to organize our demonstrations and protests as well as writing letters to the editor of the local newspapers.

Nominated by John Helge