



For Immediate Release

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### **Maine Council on Aging Announces 2019 Award Winners**

Aging services leaders, lawmakers, and advocates to be honored at annual Wisdom Summit

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Shining a spotlight on leaders who are changing systems to support healthy aging, the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) today announced their 2019 award winners who will be honored at their upcoming *Wisdom Summit – Igniting Aging Activism*.

The MCOA is a broad, multidisciplinary network of more than 90 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older Mainers working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age in our homes and communities. “Maine is leading the nation in reimagining how we want to live as we grow old,” said Jess Maurer, Executive Director of the MCOA. “Mainers want to live engaged, productive lives long into old age, but our current systems don’t always support this goal. The people we’re honoring with these awards have been leading efforts to change this reality.”

The MCOA’s Lasting Legacy Award recognizes the sustained leadership of people whose commitment, ideals, and actions throughout their careers have brought about lasting and positive change to the lives of older Mainers. This year’s Lasting Legacy Award winners, **Mollie Baldwin**, former President & CEO of Home Care for Maine, and **Larry Gross**, former President & CEO of Southern Maine Agency on Aging, embody the purpose of this award. Both dedicated their entire careers to ensuring older people could access the information, supports, and services they need to live healthy and engaged lives.

The MCOA’s Legislator of the Year Award recognizes the sustained efforts of legislative leaders who actively champion legislative initiatives that improve the health, safety, and economic security of older Mainers. This year, two legislators have won the award. **Representative Jessica Fay** of Raymond will be honored for highlighting the importance of inter-governmental coordination in advancing aging policy and for reframing how we think about aging and older people. **Representative Drew Gattine** of Westbrook will be honored for his tireless focus on the needs of older Mainers, including funding for Meals on Wheels and solutions to Maine’s direct care workforce shortages.

The MCOA’s Trailblazing Advocate Award recognizes the sustained contributions of older people whose passion, actions, and advocacy have made Maine a better place for us all. Two amazing women will receive this award, **Fran Seeley** of Portland, and **Shirl Weaver** of Kennebunk. Fran has been a Foster

Grandparent for 18 years. She's honored, though, for giving voice to the challenges of living a purposeful life on a low fixed income and for her effective state house advocacy for increased benefits and property tax fairness for low-income older Mainers.

Shirl had a distinguished career in health professions education, including geriatric education. In retirement, she watches for new research and interventions that could be deployed to enhance healthy aging efforts in Maine and advocates at multiple levels for their adoption. She's also building volunteer community supports to help people stay at home, and is helping older veterans get the supports they need as a volunteer for the Vet-to-Vet program.

The award winners will be honored at the upcoming ***Wisdom Summit – Igniting Aging Activism*** on **September 24, 2019**, at the Augusta Civic Center in Augusta. The awards portion of the program is sponsored by ***Central Maine Healthcare***. **Registration closes next Monday**. Information about the event can be found [here](#).

### **About the Wisdom Summit**

Participants will also gain access to the latest policy and reform updates from state leaders, including DHHS Commissioner Lambrew and OADS Director Paul Saucier, learn what's working across our state, and hear how they can become involved. Our keynote speaker, sponsored by ***Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice***, is former Assistant Secretary for Aging, Kathy Greenlee. She is a visionary thought leader in aging policy who is keenly focused on healthy aging in rural America. She will offer us a roadmap for advancing our work here in Maine. The Summit will offer an array of interesting, engaging, and interactive work sessions where participants will gain access to new tools they can bring to their work and community efforts. **See our [full agenda](#).**

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