

2014 Grace K Smith Meritorious Service Award Winner

Dianne Clarke-Kudless ('98 Organizational Alumna)

William W. Benson, Clinical student

Leah Dembitzer, School student

Jaclyn Kanrich, School student

Mercedes Okosi, Clinical student

Introduced by Dr. Bonnie Markham (GSAPP Clinical Alumna), APA Treasurer, past GSAPP AO President, and 2010 Grace K Smith award winner

I first met Dianne at a GSAPP Alumni Organization meeting and was very impressed to learn that she was not only an active contributor to the work of our alumni group but also the mayor of Tewksbury Township. Dianne exemplifies a kind of collaborative leadership that is quite effective and strong without being competitive. She is also very generous and, in my observation, has supported others in making things happen by acting behind the scenes as a facilitator.

I have worked with Dianne in many capacities that have contributed to the strength of GSAPP and Rutgers' Alumni leadership. We were GSAPP representatives to the RU Alumni Federation (RUAUF) during a major transitional period at the university. Dianne went on to serve as leader for Strategy Development, Communications and Membership before being elected as President by RUAUF member groups where she was crucial in helping the RUAUF navigate a successful transition to become Rutgers University Alumni Association. At GSAPP, Dean Stan Messer recalled how Dianne's organizational skills, hard work and vision were instrumental in establishing the GSAPP 30th anniversary theme "Realizing the Vision" and the creation of a commemorative booklet and historical archive.

If Grace Smith were here today, she would be extremely pleased that Dianne Clarke-Kudless is receiving the award that was established in her honor. Dianne exemplifies the values that Grace held dear: to use your energy, creativity, and expertise to establish meaningful relationships, do good works, and increase the positive experiences for members of whatever community you are a part.



Dianne Clarke-Kudless MBA, PsyD

As the recipient of this 2014 Grace Smith alumni award, I am honored to be introduced by my friend Bonnie Markham (2010 Grace E Smith awardee), to have served on the Alumni Board with Grace, to have voted on establishing this award in 2008 and to have contributed to the selection of Dr. Carole Salvador as its first awardee. I never expected that life's events would bring me here today.

With respect to that destiny, leadership opportunities such as is being recognized today are not an action of individual bravery or talent. In fact, this award acknowledges much more than GSAPP, me or the initial thoughts voiced by the GSAPP AO Board in 2008. Its ambition is to create a world that reflects the dreams of GSAPP students, faculty and alumni. This requires that we engage in life beyond GSAPP.

It is through my experiences as a professional manager, community volunteer, elected official and non-profit leader that I share my reflections on organizational leadership. From this background, I would like to encourage GSAPP enthusiasts' to begin with three steps.

1. Start your leadership journey by "Showing Up"

Yes, it does begin with this simple act. One day, I decided to show up. Not everything in life begins with a grand plan or a specific goal in mind. My journey of organizational leadership largely started with this simple first step.

2. Participate in a way that makes others feel valued and engaged

This means making a conscience effort to show appreciation for the contributions of others. At GSAPP I was trained with clinical and school psychologists where I learned professional respect and acquired valued friendships. As RUAF President, I worked with Rutgers staff leadership, developed friends from all campuses and engaged with Rutgers alumni lawyers, social workers, librarians, court judges, lobbyists, media specialists, good-hearted volunteers, winners and losers, people with troubles and others on a streak of good luck or fortune. That is where the important stuff happened – building relationships and sharing experiences with folks with big individual, generational, financial, social and program differences.

The point here is that individual impacts are never really the product of the individual; they come from people willing to work with differing interests to make a something happen. My special contribution may have been my tremendous optimism for people (and organizations), my love of learning, my courage, and my willingness to make the sacrifice to get it done.

3. Leverage your talents and the opportunities that are presented

Don't just occupy the seat at the table, change what is happening at the table. Currently I have brought my community leadership experience as Mayor to my role as President in Greenville SC Sister Cities that includes outreach to China, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Japan and France. I also am a volunteer leader with Rotary International where as I am currently with an internet Rotary Club helping to design a membership platform for crowdsourcing and crowdfunding for service projects around the globe. Through Greenville Chamber of Commerce and the Society of Psychologists in Management I stay engaged in community and for-profit organizations. My work as Enterprise Service LLC focuses on project and performance management and is where I share my talents by providing coaching assistance to companies and individuals who struggle with choices of work/life balance.

It is an honor to be selected and to share this award with four students who are themselves organizational leaders. We all thank those who made this award possible today.