

## **Midwest States Center: Board Member Bios March 2008**

**Betty Ahrens.** Betty Ahrens holds a law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law. She has been with ICAN since 1993. Beginning in 2006, she has been Executive Director and prior to that she was co-Executive Director. Before becoming co-Executive Director in 2002, she performed nearly every job within the organization, including field canvasser, phone canvasser, organizer and Program Director. She was the Iowa Project Director of Money Watch 2000, and the Coordinator for the Coalition for Corporate Responsibility. Betty also worked on a contract basis for four years with the Midwest States Center, during which time she served as the coordinator of the Center's Money in Politics Program and staffed the Center in our role as the Midwest Regional Partner for Public Campaign.

**Ellen Anderson.** Senator Ellen Anderson was elected to the Minnesota Senate in 1992 and re-elected in 1996, 2000 and 2002 as a member of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. Senator Anderson has been a leader in the areas of sustainable energy policy, affordable housing, family friendly workplace policies and worker rights, violence prevention, progressive tax structures, and inner city revitalization. Senator Anderson's current community involvement includes Board Member-PEOPLE, Inc., Board Member for Lifetrack Resources, and Member-Hampden Park Foods Co-op. She has also served as a Board Member of Como Lake Strategic Management and a Member of the Center for Violence Prevention and Control Advisory Board at University of Minnesota School of Public Health. She was selected the U.S. Democratic delegate to the American Council of Young Political Leaders/East-West Center's 1994 New Generation Seminar and a Center for Policy Alternatives 1995 Flemming Fellow.

**Dwain Berry.** Dwain is an African American minister and a long time community organizer in the Metcalf neighborhood of Milwaukee. He is actively engaged in building Citizen Action of Milwaukee, an important experiment in linking urban organizing to state coalition work. He previously served as the President of the Board of the Wisconsin Community Fund, and on the Steering Committee of the Wisconsin - based Apprentice Organizing Project.

**Llewellyn Boyd.** US Action-American Indian Council - Mr. Boyd served as the first chairman of the Forest County Potawatomi Mining Impacts Committee (1979-82). He later served 6 straight years as chairman of the Menominee Mining Impacts Committee (1996-2001) while a Menominee tribal legislator. Since 1996, he has served as board member on the Citizen Action of Wisconsin board of directors, and is a charter member of the US Action board.

**John Campbell.** John represents Iowa Citizen Action Network on the Midwest States Center Board of Directors. John is a long-time labor and community activist in Des Moines. He is an active member of the board of directors of ICAN, and an active local labor leader and NAACP leader in Des Moines. In 2004 John took a leave of absence from ICAN's board to serve as ICAN Vote Civic Engagement Director.

**Sheila Cochran.** Sheila is the Chief Operating Officer-Secretary-Treasurer of the Milwaukee Labor Council and the President of the Board of Directors of Wisconsin Citizen Action. The highest-ranking African American woman holding an elected position in organized labor in the United States, she has moved from rank and file into leadership in the union, the labor movement, and the state. She coordinates Election Protection for the City of Milwaukee.

**Linda Honold.** Linda has served as Executive Director of Citizen Action of Wisconsin since 2006. She has 15 years experience as a consultant helping organizations develop systems to achieve their goals and provide growth and development of employees and members. Most recently she served as a

consultant to the Wisconsin Progressive Blueprint Project responsible for the implementation of the organizing component of the strategy. Linda holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire, a M.S. in Industrial Relations from UW-Madison and a Ph.D. in Human and Organizational Systems from the Fielding Graduate University. She is the author of *Developing Employees Who Love to Learn* and co-author of *Organizational DNA*, as well as numerous articles on adult learning and organizational development.

**Dan McGrath.** Dan joined Take Action Minnesota as Executive Director at the end of 2005. He got his start as an organizer with the Hamline Midway Coalition, a neighborhood group in St. Paul, before joining the staff of Progressive Minnesota as a political and community organizer, where he later rose to become Executive Director. He left to work internationally in the Republic of Ireland at the Glencree Centre for Reconciliation and later as a Democracy Educator for the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA). Before returning to Minnesota, he ran a national community and political program for the Service Employees International Union. Dan has managed local and statewide issue and get-out-the-vote campaigns, including successful campaigns to stop corporate welfare and win needed resources for public schools. He has also designed and implemented cutting-edge programs to organize and mobilize new Americans for political power in the Hmong, Latino and Somali communities.

**Ron McKinley.** As Project Director for the Kellogg Action Lab, Ron facilitates connections between nonprofits and capacity building resources in an effort to build strength throughout the nonprofit/philanthropic sector. Ron is a long time leader in Native American philanthropy, he has served as executive director of the National Network of Grantmakers, director of the Wilder Center for Communities, vice president of The Saint Paul Companies, Inc Foundation, founding director of The Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, senior program officer for the Minneapolis Foundation, and as president of the Minneapolis Planning Commission.

**Senator Mark Miller.** Mark was elected Co-Chair of the Midwest Progressive Elected Officials Network (MPEON) Steering Committee at the November 2004 gathering and sits on the Board of Directors of the Midwest States Center as a representative of MPEON. Mark was elected to the Wisconsin State Senate in November 2004. Prior to that he served three terms in the Wisconsin State Assembly. Senator Miller currently serves on the Joint Finance Committee, chairs the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, is Vice-Chair of the Ethics Reform and Government Operations Committee, and a member of the Joint Committee on Legislative Council. He also serves as Chair of the WI Senate Democratic Caucus. Mark is a graduate of the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership and Development and is a Fleming Fellow of the Center for Policy Alternatives. He is a member of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators, a member of the Madison Area Sustainable Lifestyle Campaign (EcoTeams, known as EnAct), and the Organization for Research, Education, and Policy on Food (REAP). He is an active member of the Monona Chamber of Commerce, the Madison Institute, the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, the Coalition for Wisconsin Aging Groups, Urban Open Space Foundation, and Friends of the Aldo Leopold Center. Mark has received several awards and honors. He was named a Friend of Urban Open Space, received the 2001 Elected Official Award from the Association of Retarded Citizens, given the Clean 16 Award from Environmental Decade, and received a Service Award by the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards recognizing him for his service in the protection of public health. Mark is committed to expanding access to healthcare, strengthening environmental protections and fully funding education for immediate prosperity and our economic future. He served on the Dane County Board of Supervisors from 1996-2000. He was a military pilot in the Air National Guard from 1966-1995 (retired Lt. Colonel). Mark grew up in Dane County, Wisconsin where he graduated from Middleton High School and the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

**Don Morrison.** Don is a long time progressive leader on social and economic justice issues in the state,

Don Morrison has over 25 years as an activist and 13 years in a North Dakota leadership role. Director of the new ND People.Org, Don was the founder of the North Dakota Progressive Coalition. Don has long-standing working relationships with numerous state and federal elected officials. He worked for both of North Dakota's U.S. Senators previous to their elections to the Senate. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia, a teacher, and a budget analyst and research analyst for the State of North Dakota. He has developed a reputation for collaboration and coalition building whether it was as a state employee or political activist. Don is a native of Minot, North Dakota, and has a BA degree in history from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, and an MA degree in political science from the University of North Dakota.

**Barry Nelson.** Barry is the former chairperson of the North Dakota Progressive Coalition's Board of Directors. He is Executive Director of the Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative, a program that works to reframe community investment in its youth and to reduce risky behaviors among youth. He previously spent 20 years with Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota primarily with its refugee resettlement program and as development director. He is the chairperson of the Fargo Human Relations Commission, a Board member of the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition which is working to establish a statewide Human Rights Commission.

**Red Platz.** UAW Region 4 International Representative Red Platz began his union career as a member of UAW Local 833 when he was hired at the Kohler Company in 1969. Platz first became active in his local in 1977 when he was elected as a Steward in the Enamel Shop. He eventually held the positions of Chief Steward, Vice-President and President of his local. He was involved in contract negotiations from 1980 until 2001. He was also very active on the Recreation, Conservation and Golf committees for his local. In 1990 he was appointed as a full time Benefit-Safety Representative for Local 833. In this capacity he mainly dealt with the insurance and EAP programs at Kohler. Also, since 1990 he traveled throughout the country doing worksite Health and Safety training for the UAW under a series of grants from OSHA. Region 4 Director, Dennis Williams, appointed him to his current position in August of 2001. In this position as CAP Coordinator he is responsible for political and legislative issues in a six-state region including Wisconsin, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming.

**Shelley Seeberg.** Shelley is the Area Director for AFSCME in the Upper Midwest area covering Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Nebraska. She was is a founding leader of the North Dakota Progressive Coalition and was chairperson of the board for several years. She formerly served as the state director for the national AFL-CIO in North Dakota and South Dakota. Shelley was a Democratic-NPL candidate for Secretary of State in 1996, a paralegal and legislative coordinator for North Dakota Legal Assistance, VIP coordinator for the state AFL-CIO COPE, and a field staffer for North Dakota Farmers Union. She also has led homeless, low income and human rights organizations.

**Doug Williams.** Doug has been a member of the IUE-CWA since 1968. He has served as an elected official in one leadership capacity or another at the Local, District and International level since 1978. Since 2001, in his role as International Representative for the IUE-CWA, his responsibilities include the areas of politics, contract service work and organizing. He has served on a number of non-profit Boards in the past, including Clean Water Action Alliance of Minnesota, where he continues to provide leadership on it's political committee. Prior to his current position as Treasurer and a founding member of the Board of Directors of Take Action Minnesota, he was Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Alliance of Progressive Action (MAPA). Doug has served as President of the Midwest States Center Board of Directors since late 2002. He is engaged in a broad range of environmental, economic and social justice issues.