

2019 June Miller Legacy Award in Literacy

Paula Aldridge

Paula Aldridge has served in many roles with the Kalamazoo Literacy Council over the years. She began volunteering with the KLC in 2001 and has left a lasting impression on the organization.

Paula first served as President of the KLC in 2007. She served on the Strategic Planning Committee in 2007 that worked for an entire year to determine the vision and future of the organization. This year-long process concluded the organization would need to make the transition from an all-volunteer operation to an organization with a professional staff and a governing board to better meet its mission. Her second term as President was from 2010-2011 when she helped guide the organization through its first year with an Executive Director. She has served on the Finance Committee for many years, where her experience as a retiree from H & R Block has helped keep the organization on a sustainable financial path. She is also active in the League of Women's Voters and has helped KLC learners register to vote and to understand the importance of voting.

In 2014, Paula received the Literacy Advocate of the Year Award for her leadership during the 40th Anniversary of the KLC. That year, she was instrumental in helping the KLC be recipient of a major gift from Women Who Care and has continued to provide advice and guidance to help the organization grow.

In addition to her Board and committee service, Paula has been a Tutor Trainer since 2010 and serves on the Adult Tutoring Program Team. She is an active tutor and has had three students over her years of service. She is a computer instructor and has helped scores of adult learners improve their digital literacy skills. Her service with the KLC has positively impacted all levels of the organization, including the Board of Directors, tutors, learners, and supporters throughout the community.

2019 Literacy Advocate of the Year

Julie Lewandowski

Julie Lewandowski has over 40 years of experience as an administrative assistant with companies and organizations. In 2013, she brought that wealth of knowledge to the Kalamazoo Literacy Council to serve as a volunteer administrative assistant for the organization's Executive Director. If you visit the KLC, you will see Julie every Tuesday and Thursday morning working diligently to bring efficiency and order to the KLC's office. She maintains our member database, tracks donations, prepares purchase orders and bank slips, edits documents, and serves as "proofreader-in-residence." She also is a reliable sounding board for many of the ideas that emanate from within the KLC.

In addition to her administrative duties, Julie serves as a member of the Finance Committee and she sits on the Campaign Cabinet of the 2019 Everyone Needs to Read Annual Campaign. Her thoughtful advice, patience, and attention to detail has helped the KLC grow year after year.

This year, Julie and her husband Keith provided the lead gift to establish an Endowment Fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to build a strong financial future for the KLC. She has been an advisor, advocate, and friend to this organization and her passion and commitment to the organization's mission has helped maintain order and advance the cause of adult literacy in Kalamazoo County.