

ADvancing States Honors Lex Frieden with 2020 Katie Beckett Award



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ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA – ADvancing States, the association representing state long-term services and supports agencies, and its board of directors are proud to announce the winner of the 2020 Katie Beckett Award. This year, the board has selected Lex Frieden as the recipient of the Beckett Award. ADvancing States Executive Director Martha Roherty highlighted his extensive contributions to combatting discrimination and promoting human rights for individuals with disabilities, stating “Lex Frieden was a crucial contributor to the development and passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act and millions of people with disabilities have benefited in the United States because of his leadership.”

When accepting the awards, Mr. Frieden commented, “Just like Katie Beckett, I would never have had the opportunity to achieve what I have without the support of loyal, loving, and caring family members and without the benefit of Federal programs.”

Lex Frieden, MA, LLD (hon) is a professor at UTHealth School of Biomedical Informatics and directs the Independent Living Research Utilization program at The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research (TIRR) at Memorial Hermann. Best known for his contributions to the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Frieden suffered a spinal cord injury while in college and has used a wheelchair for more than 40 years. In March 2013, Frieden received a 2013 Henry Viscardi Achievement Award, which honors the accomplishments of people with disabilities on a global basis. Frieden has received two appointments as the University of Texas System Chancellor's Health Fellow for Disabilities. In 1974, he completed a one-year teaching fellowship in psychology at the University of Houston, and in 1972, he completed a two-year research internship in rehabilitation at Baylor College of Medicine.

About the Award

Katie Beckett Award

Born with medical support needs, Katie spent the first years of her life in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at St. Luke’s Hospital in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Though her family and doctors wanted Katie to live at home, there was at that time, no Medicaid coverage for medical services provided in the community. Fighting to bring her daughter home, Julie Beckett challenged this policy, and was ultimately successful in carving out an exception in the Medicaid program that allows children with disabilities to receive services in their homes and communities. Thanks to her mother’s tireless advocacy, on December 19, 1981, Katie moved home. Known as the “Katie Beckett Waiver” since its inception in 1982, this



monumental policy shift has allowed more than 500,000 children to live at home and have access to the treatment they need. Since 2011, NASUAD has chosen an individual whose work has promoted the ideals of independence, dignity, and self-determination for individuals with disabilities to receive the Katie Beckett award.

Previous award winners include Nancy Thaler, Jim Firman, and Jamie Kendall.

About ADvancing States

ADvancing States was founded in 1964 under the name National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA). In 2019, the association changed its name to ADvancing States. Today, ADvancing States represents the nation's 56 state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities and long-term services and supports directors.

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