



## 2022 Leadership Award Recipients



### 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award: Madeleine Will

Madeleine Will has been a leading advocate for persons with disabilities for several decades. She has led successful efforts at the local, state and national levels to improve services for children and adults with disabilities, including efforts to establish national programs across the United States for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, transition and supported employment programs for youth with disabilities, post-secondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities, the Stephen Beck, Jr. Achieving a Better Life Expectancy savings account and demonstration to promote best practices to bring about the successful inclusion of special education students in general education classrooms. She served as Assistant Secretary of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) in the US Department of Education for six years and was later the Chairperson of the President's Committee for people with Intellectual Disabilities for four years.

After nearly a decade as director of the National Down Syndrome Society's Public Policy Center, she co-founded the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination (CPSD) with leaders of the Fragile X Foundation and Autism Society in 2008. Since that time, she has helped to expand this advocacy coalition to more than a dozen national disability organizations. The CPSD presumes the competence of all citizens with disabilities to become productive and self-sufficient members of society through competitive employment in integrated environments.

She has three adult children, the oldest of which was born with a disability.



### **National Leadership Award: Beth Myers**

Beth Myers is the Lawrence B. Taishoff Assistant Professor of Inclusive Education, the Executive Director of the Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education, and the Assistant Director for the Center on Disability and Inclusion. She is a tenure-track faculty member in the Teaching and Leadership Department in the School of Education at Syracuse University, teaching in the Inclusive Elementary program where she started in 2014. She oversees

InclusiveU, a federally-recognized model program for college students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Professor Myers taught in the Lower Merion School District in Pennsylvania and helped to create a best-practice inclusive program there. She opened a regional center for autism services in 2006 and served as Executive Director before joining the center's consultation team in 2011. Beth has provided school consultations and staff development to over 60 school districts. Additionally, Professor Myers has been the faculty liaison to the Syracuse City School District for the SUITR Program, a Masters Residency program in urban special education.

Dr. Myers has been awarded over \$13 million in external funding to support research and program development in school inclusion for students with disabilities, including a \$2 million grant from the US Department of Education for her work on Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID). She has served on the Fit Families research team and has published several articles and book chapters in inclusive physical activity for students with disabilities. Myers co-edited a special issue of TASH Connections: Post-secondary Education and Self-Advocacy and a special issue of Impact: Inclusive Higher Education. Her book, *Autobiography on the Spectrum: Disrupting the Autism Narrative*, was published in 2019 by Teachers College Press. Her second book, *Narrating Higher Education: Intellectual Disability with co-author Michael Gill*, is under contract with University of Minnesota Press.

Myers has conducted research to study the autobiographical works of adolescents with autism, which won the Ralph C. Preston Award for Scholarship and Teaching Contributing to Social Justice and Educational Equity. Myers currently serves on the National Down Syndrome Society Inclusion Committee. She is the founding Executive Editor of the *Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education* and the Chair of the Annual State of the Art Conference in Inclusive Higher Education. Dr. Myers was awarded the 2018 CNY Business Journal's Business Woman of the Year in Higher Education, the 2021 Meredith Early Career Teaching Award, and the 2022 George Jesien National Leadership Award in Higher Education.

Dr. Myers holds bachelor's and master's degrees in elementary education, special education, and literacy from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia and a doctorate from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.



### **Institute of Higher Education Award: Margaret "Margo" Izzo**

Margo Izzo is Professor Emeritus of Special Education and Psychology who focuses on the transition-to-college-and-careers for students with disabilities for the majority of her career. Previously she was Program Director for Transition Services at the Ohio State University Nisonger Center for 22 years. As Past President of the Division of Career Development and Transition (DCDT) within the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), she provided leadership to national, state and regional committees to improve the quality of transition services and outcomes. As the PI of two consecutive TPSID grants, Margo started Ohio's Statewide Consortia involving 10 inclusive postsecondary education programs across the state. In 2016, Margo co-authored a book with LeDerick Horne entitled: *Empowering Students with Hidden Disabilities: A Path to Pride and Success.*"

Dr. Vreeburg Izzo completed her Ph.D. in Special Education at OSU, and received her MA from George Washington University in Washington D.C. She is a recipient of a Mary E. Switzer Fellowship from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR).

Dr. Vreeburg Izzo has developed educational curricula for students with disabilities and their parents, conducted numerous trainings, focus groups, and interviews with teachers and students, managed the development of websites, videocassettes, and other dissemination products including a national teleconference, and has published numerous articles, papers, and information briefs on disability and transition issues. She continues to serve as external evaluator of the Think College Inclusive Higher Education Network, a technical assistance and dissemination grant funded to the Institute of Community Inclusion, UMass, Boston.



### **Laura Lee Leadership Award: Marina Martinez**

Marina Martinez is a 2021 graduate of the University of Georgia. She completed the school's Inclusive Postsecondary Education Program, Destination Dawgs. She majored in marketing with concentrations in public relations, journalism, and advocacy. Through her classes, she developed skills in managing social media platforms and engaging in multicultural marketing. In her last semester, she was selected by UGA as a featured student of the 2021 graduating class and partnered directly with a Marketing and Design Manager to create a vlogging project about her college experience.

Through her education, training, and opportunities at Fulton County Schools and UGA, Marina has fulfilled her dream of being employed full time. She currently works for a large, international food export company in their HR and marketing departments.

Marina is also a passionate advocate for people with disabilities. She's a well-known speaker and has presented at the United Nations, Emory School of Medicine, and many Down syndrome conferences.

In her free time, she loves going to concerts and knowing the words to every song ever written. Marina enjoys traveling and learning about new cultures. She embraces her Mexican culture and she's fluent in Spanish. At home, she enjoys watching a good movie and spending time with her family and friends.