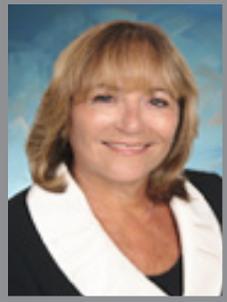


Human and Civil Rights Award Winner

◆ Dolores McCracken ◆

H. Councill Trenholm Memorial Award (Non-Black)

(posthumously)



The late great Dolores D. McCracken, former president of the Pennsylvania State Education Association, was an unwavering champion of educators, a tireless advocate for strong unionism in the state of Pennsylvania, and proved that devotion to teaching our youth can extend beyond the classroom.

The Queens, New York native relocated to suburban Philadelphia, working as a paralegal, until, as is the case with new elementary school parents, she was motivated to get involved, becoming president of the Churchville Elementary Home and School Association.

Dolores was a passionate fighter for public education, racial and social justice; upholding a strong belief that all educators and students should work and learn in an environment free of racial, social and economic disparity and bias. Dolores knew first-hand of the challenges educators face to maintain the highest standards for our children, and she also knew that strong labor advocacy was the key to meeting said standards. Dolores wanted to be a part of the process to make lasting successful change for educators and the students they served. She worked with the Pennsylvania AFT, becoming savvy to the role politics played in creating conditions that benefitted students and teachers alike. She encouraged unions to back candidates sympathetic to labor, and formed coalitions with other labor leaders, living the mottos “strength in numbers”, and “united we stand, divided we fall”.

Realizing that academic excellence cannot flourish if community involvement is not present, McCracken tirelessly made sure the citizens of Pennsylvania were always “protected and respected”. She worked hand in hand with social justice organizations, school safety boards, and in concert with entities tasked with supporting at-risk youth.

In 2011, Dolores McCracken was elected as the first non-teacher to the position of Treasurer of the PSEA. Her first order of business was to increase ethnic minority recruitment, retention and participation in PSEA, by tapping into urban communities of students and educators that were not historically represented by the organization. Her dedication to insuring every child in the Keystone state had a chance to excel was met with great enthusiasm, resulting in her election as vice-president of the PSEA in 2015... eventually ascending to the presidency in 2017. As president, Dolores established the PSEA Education Justice Committee as a permanent structure for the organization to review and respond to inequities in public schools across the Commonwealth.

Dolores’ untimely passing in November of 2018 leaves behind a great legacy; a devoted wife, mother and educator, passionate about creating environments for young people to always achieve their best. From her reforms in the areas of standardized testing, to combating the rising trend of our schools becoming danger zones instead of safe spaces for learning, Dr. McCracken’s real legacy is to inspire us all to put children first; those given the responsibility to nurture them second; and hold our leaders accountable who fail to do so.

Dr. Dolores McCracken, a life truly defined by never leaving any child behind.