

Macomb Feminist Network Writing Women Into History 2022 Honoree Bios

Gayle Tronvig Carper, has woven her background and training as an attorney, public defender, and WIU professor into the activities she has pursued as a civic-minded Macomb resident. Her approach to the roles and tasks she assumes is consistently meticulous. Whether she was serving on the City Council (first appointed, then elected), writing a commentary for Tri-States Public Radio's Women's Voices, or helping establish an organization to help ensure food security for residents in need, her approach reflected scrupulous research and an exceptionally coherent presentation of information and insight. Because she knows her limits, she will not always say "yes" when approached with a request for help, but friends and colleagues are certain when she does say "yes," she will commit herself fully to getting a project done, and done well. Her commitments to Macomb not only encompass her tenure as a City Council member, as a commentator on TSPR, or as initial President of the Good Food Collaborative. With her husband, she regularly supports TSPR through her on-air participation in its fund drives. She also has co-chaired the annual Gazebo Art Festival and the Macomb Art Center's Art and Gift Market multiple times, taking responsibility for much of the events' organization and publicity. As a Macomb Feminist Network member, Gayle often facilitates MFN programs; she also co-chairs the committee that promotes a Network priority: the inclusion of feminists in local leadership positions. Gayle's contributions to Macomb's civic and cultural life reflect her strength and integrity as well as her extraordinary energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to a healthy, viable community.

Nancy "Nan" Crossman has been helping ensure a diverse and lively arts scene in Macomb for many years. Whether serving on the Performing Art Society Board, facilitating Macomb Community Theater productions, or coordinating the multiple activities sponsored by the Macomb Arts Center, Nan has been generously giving her time to make sure these ventures attract audiences and help both spectators and contributors enjoy the talent of the many artists in the community. The wide spectrum of activities she organizes and manages through the MAC as its volunteer Executive Director testify to her conviction that art, whether visual or performance, contributes to the well-being of practitioners as well as consumers. She programs events and projects that clearly appeal to children from tikes to teens, others that appeal to adults, and still others that attract entire families. Programs for kids, judging from their titles, hint at Nan's own creativity as well as her humor: Flying Monkeys, Flying Squirrels, Flying Fish, and Rising Stars are examples, as is Battle of the Brushes. Nan is the primary organizer of receptions that coincide with the openings of the center's exhibits and she coordinates the volunteer hosts who welcome visitors to the center from week to week. With colleagues, she plans and facilitates special events and coordinates MAC rentals since it is an attractive venue for private and public celebrations and meetings. As Executive Director, Nan has taken on many of the nitty-gritty, behind-the-scenes roles—from vacuuming to taking out the trash--event planning requires as well as the more visible role of host for programs, receptions, and exhibits. She has consistently done so with grace.

Verneata D. Jones is well known and respected in the Macomb community. She has helped organize and implement many programs and events sponsored by her church and various community organizations, including a summer youth program that emphasized education, recreation, and service, YMCA programs for seniors, a summer food distribution initiative, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Juneteenth celebrations. Widely and comfortably known as Aunt V throughout the community, what is perhaps most remarkable about her service is what she has been doing on her own year after year. She provided foster care, often on an emergency basis, for over 27 children, making sure those she cared for always had what they needed and, when she could, giving them what they wanted as well. Usually, she cared for one or two children at a time, but when a friend of hers died unexpectedly, she was ready to take in her five children, all under the age of ten, since that allowed them to stay together as a family. She reaches out to people with ease, recognizes their needs, and quietly finds ways to meet those needs. Baking cookies with neighborhood kids, driving kids to Spring Lake to fish, delivering home-cooked meals to elders who are less mobile than she, giving a ride or lending her car to someone who needs transportation, poll watching during local and national elections—these are all within Aunt V’s repertoire of service. She is able to discern and respond to the material, educational, and emotional needs of the people with whom she interacts no matter what their age. Skilled and caring, she has enriched the lives of numerous people in the community, consistently doing so with love.

Jill Joline Myers--using her doctoral studies in law, first in Baltimore and then in Macomb--has spent much of her career working on behalf of victims and society. She began by representing abused and neglected children; later she represented victims of violence and terrorism. She continues to focus on the well-being and safety of children, no longer as a prosecutor or investigator, but as the President of the Macomb CUSD #185, helping to develop policies that determine how Macomb schools prepare students for a successful future. Given students’ widespread access to the internet, Jill’s background in electronic surveillance and cyber investigations has been particularly valuable in addressing online bullying and in promoting cyber safety and digital citizenship training. As the Director of WIU’s School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration, she is actively involved in the education and training of future public safety and first responders. Though much of Jill’s work today centers around providing quality education for youth and public safety professionals, not all of her contributions to the community are so closely identified with policies, the law, or her students. She often helps children “Shop with Santa” during Macomb’s Dickens on the Square celebrations, delivers breakfasts and lunches to those who need them, and has recently created a “Talkin’ Town Tour” that offers residents and visitors an accessible introduction to Macomb’s notorious past. Further, she serves on the board of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, is a member of the Macomb Police and Fire Commission, and is President-elect of the city’s morning Rotary Club. Her commitment to the community runs deep.