

October 11, 2016

Friends of Housing honored for leadership, inspiration

SEATTLE—The Washington State Housing Finance Commission has honored six individuals as “Friends of Housing” for their work to create, support and advocate for affordable housing in Washington state.

In addition, Congressman Denny Heck presented the Margaret M. Sevy Affordable Housing Lifetime Achievement Award to Tacoma Housing Authority director Michael Mirra.

The awards were presented October 5 in a lunch ceremony at the annual Housing Washington conference in Tacoma.

“These inspiring leaders have improved the lives of thousands of Washington residents through affordable housing, while raising the bar for all of us in the industry,” said Karen Miller, chair of the Housing Finance Commission.



From left: **Michael Mirra** (Sevy Lifetime Achievement Award); **Stephen Norman**; **Betsy Hunter**; **Marilee Roloff**; **Chris Lowell**. Not pictured: **Joanne Quinn**, **Robert Rozen**. *Photo: Alec Miller.*

Additional photos available.

2016 Friends of Housing:

- **Stephen Norman:** Improving health and education outcomes for residents is a passion of Stephen Norman, executive director of the King County Housing Authority. He has led the agency to success through local partnerships and lent his voice to national housing advocacy efforts.
- **Marilee Roloff:** The founder of Spokane’s Crosswalk teen shelter and the recently retired director of Volunteers of American Eastern Washington, Marilee Roloff has spent her career combating homelessness in Spokane through shelter, services, and most recently permanent housing at the new Marilee Apartments.
- **Betsy Hunter:** “Community” has been Betsy Hunter’s focus during her years as deputy director for Plymouth Housing and formerly chief real-estate development officer for Capitol Hill Housing. Her impact can be felt in award-winning housing projects throughout Seattle
- **Chris Lowell:** As the executive director of the Housing Authority of Thurston County, Chris Lowell has built a small and struggling agency into a financially strong one that oversees more than 500 units of housing. She has also fostered collaboration with local nonprofits and supported affordable-housing advocacy.
- **Joanne Quinn:** A longtime senior asset manager at the City of Seattle Office of Housing, Joanne Quinn was honored as an “unsung hero” whose expertise has supported affordable-housing management and sustainable building standards statewide.
- **Robert Rozen:** The sole out-of-state honoree, Robert Rozen played a key role in the development of the 1986 federal legislation that created the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program while working for then-Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell. He has since continued to advocate strongly for the program.

2016 Margaret M. Sevy Lifetime Achievement Award:

- **Michael Mirra** has shown a lifelong commitment to social justice and creating opportunity. As an attorney during the ‘90s, Michael Mirra successfully litigated on behalf of homeless families and poor neighborhoods in several high-profile cases, including Washington State Coalition for the Homeless vs. the Department of Social and Health Services, decided by the state Supreme Court.

He has since led the [Tacoma Housing Authority](#) in the multimillion-dollar transformations of the Salishan and Bay Terrace communities, and won the agency national recognition for its innovative and life-changing support of families and children.

The [Friend of Housing Awards](#) are presented each year to individuals or organizations who have made exceptional contributions to creating or supporting affordable housing in ways such as helping to solve housing problems, creating innovative financing mechanisms, or drafting legislation or policy that addresses the state's housing needs.

The [Margaret M. Sevy Lifetime Achievement Award](#), named for a respected former staff member of the Housing Finance Commission, recognizes and celebrates individuals for their exceptional contributions, vision, and commitment to promoting affordable housing in Washington State over a sustained period of time.

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The [Washington State Housing Finance Commission](#) is a publicly accountable, self-supporting team that works with lenders, investors, developers, nonprofit organizations and more to bring private investment dollars to benefit families and achieve public goals throughout Washington. The Commission has created and preserved more than 334,000 affordable homes across the state, while contributing more than \$42.5 billion and 240,000 jobs to the economy.



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