

Laurie Smith Camp Integrity in Service Award Recipient: Dianne S. Lozier

Sitting in the Lozier Corporation offices in the Landmark Building, overlooking the Gene Leahy Mall, Dianne Lozier's eyes dance with energy and empathy. Exuding humility and humbleness, and reticent to be interviewed, Dianne instead encourages attention to be focused on the programs and projects that she and the Lozier Foundation support in our community. By the end of the conversation, one thing is clear: it's time to get to work; there is so much more to be done.

Dianne Seeman Lozier is our 2024 Laurie Smith Camp Integrity in Service Award recipient, chosen by the Past-Presidents' Council of the OBA in part for her decades of unwavering support for the non-profit community in Omaha and in particular her work with organizations supporting girls and women's issues, including Women's Fund of Omaha, Women's Center for Advancement, and Girl's Inc. The work of the Lozier Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Lozier Corporation, is directed by Dianne, and donates millions of dollars in total annually to support local area non-profits.



Before diving into her story, we had to ask Dianne: Did you know Judge Laurie Smith Camp? "I did," Dianne remarked. "We were in a book club together for many years before her passing. Laurie was an amazing person to get to know. She was incredibly compassionate, fair, and concerned about people." Did you actually read the books in your book club? "We did," adding with a smile, "and we drank some wine too."

Born and raised in the suburbs of Minneapolis, Dianne's family was relatively poor, with one period of time she remembers when they were on welfare. "That made an impression on me," she said. While finishing up her undergraduate studies in St. Cloud, she decided to apply to law school. After being accepted to William Mitchell Law School, Dianne continued to work full time while taking law classes during nights and weekends. She worked in Risk Management at what is now Wells Fargo, investigating fidelity bond losses. The work was fascinating to Dianne, and she was struck by the stories of people who stole from the company because they didn't make enough to make ends meet.

She then worked for the quality and risk management department of Health One, a company that owned and

managed hospitals in the upper Midwest. After 4 years of night classes, Dianne graduated law school and continued at Health One, moving into a legal counsel and Vice President role. Dianne was ultimately with the company a total of 11 years.

While working in Minneapolis in the early 1990s, one of Dianne's former law school professors introduced her to Allan Lozier, owner and head of Lozier Corporation in Omaha. The two hit it off, and soon after Dianne moved to Omaha, got married to Allan, and started a legal counsel position with CHI. A few years later, the in-house legal counsel position at Lozier came available somewhat abruptly, and both Dianne and Allan agreed she'd fill the position as interim while a replacement was sought out. Thirty-one years later, Dianne continues to be legal counsel at Lozier. Lozier Corporation employs over 2,000 workers, and is a national leader in store fixtures (read shelving).

A few years into Dianne's work at Lozier, she started working with Allan on the Foundation side. The Lozier Foundation had been in operation for over a decade at that point, and Allan had focused efforts on "leveling the playing field" for those who are struggling to secure basic necessities like food, shelter, and clothing, to try to help raise people up in the Omaha metro area. With Dianne's help, the scope of funding priorities expanded to include an explicit focus on a commitment to helping programming and organizations focused on supporting women and girls. Sometimes there was pushback to the initiatives the Lozier Foundation wanted to support. One story that Dianne recalled, "Allan was working with United Way on their fundraising campaign. He found out that United Way was funding Boy's Club at a much higher amount than Girl's Club. Using his influence as a large donor, Allan insisted that United Way create a plan to move towards parity in funding of the Boy's and Girl's Clubs. And in the end they did, thanks to Allan, and that was an important message to send."

The Women's Fund of Omaha has been a special focus for Dianne over the years, and the work that organization has done is clearly a source of pride. From a modest beginning in supporting women in (and running for) leadership

(Lozier Continued)

positions, to their work on adolescent health, to now doing more work in the advocacy space, “[Their] work has grown significantly over the years. Kudos to Jo Giles, Executive Director of the Women’s Fund for all that she’s done to grow their impact.”

A calling card of the Lozier Foundation is its support for general operating funds and specific programming of non-profits in the community. One unique issue that Allan and Dianne identified over their years of Foundation work: “capital campaign creep.” When examining their levels of giving, they found that the percentage of dollars given in support of capital campaign projects were higher than they had aimed for. Says Dianne, “It’s easy to give to a capital campaign; there’s a start, a raise, and a finish to the project. You know when the campaign is done. What’s more difficult (in some people’s minds) is to give in support of general operating funds – that ‘campaign’ never ends, and will be there every year.” Sticking to their plan, Allan and Dianne adjusted the Foundation’s giving levels to regain focus on that social service, health and education programming work of non-profits, and less on asks for money for buildings and city beautification.

Allan Lozier passed in 2021, but the philanthropic work he and Dianne have done over the years continues in earnest. Recently, the Foundation has been working with the Department of Education on reading initiatives for grade school children. Says Dianne, “Education is critically important. I think we don’t appreciate how important it is, especially for young children. It’s foundational for them; it impacts our poverty levels, our crime levels, it has all sorts of potential. It’s a hard subject, it’s also very expensive, but I think we have to be better about focusing on young children in the early grades. Reading is incredibly important; if you get to ninth grade and you can’t read well you are in a terrible spot and life decisions become that much more difficult.” Dianne also sees affordable housing is also a critically important subject, and the Foundation is focused on helping unhoused and underhoused people in the Omaha metro area.

In conversations with Past Presidents of the OBA who selected Dianne for the Smith Camp Award, it was repeated many times that the work of Dianne and the Lozier Foundation reflects so well what Judge Smith Camp emphasized with her laser-like focus: through mentoring and empowerment of girls and women in our community, we’ll show that gender should never hold one back for

what they want in life.

Said Dianne, “Laurie [Smith Camp] had this way of being assertive and not putting people off. She did it in a way that was thoughtful and tried to encourage people to be more thoughtful and open their eyes to things they might otherwise might not see.”

Please join the Omaha Bar Association in congratulating Dianne Lozier for her selection as the 2024 Laurie Smith Camp Integrity in Service Award.

The criteria for the Laurie Smith Camp Integrity in Service Award

For outstanding contributions, above and beyond the call of duty related to:

- *Advancing Diversity & Inclusion;*
- *Improving Access to Justice;*
- *Providing Pro Bono Service;*
- *Mentoring of Others;*
- *Advancing Innovation in the Legal Profession; and/or*
- *Serving and Representing the Legal Community.*



Hon. Laurie Smith Camp