



Dorothy Rose (Dot) Crawford

2016 Pioneer Award Recipient

For over six decades, Dot Crawford has worked to make life better for older adults in North Carolina. She began her career in the state as a social worker in 1952. She worked 32 years for the Macon County Department of Social Services, the last 26 of which she served as Director. In 1984, she retired and since that time has been a visible and effective advocate for older adults.

Dot's contributions to the field of aging include thousands upon thousands of hours of volunteer work at the local, regional, and state levels. She serves on numerous advisory boards and committees in her local community and with the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging. She has been an advocate for over 30 years for residents in adult care homes and nursing homes by serving on her county community advisory committee. She has also served as a volunteer counselor for the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) for 30 years. In 2012, she received the Jim Long Award from the NC Department of Insurance for her outstanding work as a SHIIP volunteer and advocate for the program. In 2012, the local senior center in Macon County was named after Dot and her husband of 74 years, John.

Dot has been a leader with AARP North Carolina since her retirement. Among other things, she has coordinated numerous programs across the state to promote healthy living for seniors and has been a staunch advocate for programs to support family caregivers. In 2002, she received the Andrus Award from AARP – the top award given annually to a volunteer in each state for community service.

Key leadership roles which Dot has played at the state level are very diverse. She has been a member of the Senior Tar Heel Legislature since its inception in 1993. She was the Speaker of this body, the top position in 2002-2003, and continues to chair important committees for this group. She served on the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging under two Governors and she represented North Carolina at two White House Conferences on Aging. Her participation in state level committees has resulted in her making the 300+ mile trip from her home in Franklin to Raleigh numerous times a month.

Dot's advice and counsel is sought by many who are interested in careers in aging. Since she is well known across the state, she is a good source for job referrals for many seeking employment in aging programs. Her positions and opinions are also valued by legislators and decision makers. It is not uncommon for legislators to ask what Dot's position is on an issue which impacts older adults.