

October 9, 2015

Friends of Housing honored for leadership, inspiration

SEATTLE—The Washington State Housing Finance Commission has honored five professionals as “Friends of Housing” for their work to create, support and advocate for affordable housing statewide.

In addition, Doris Koo and M.A. Leonard were honored as recipients of the Margaret M. Sevy Affordable Housing Lifetime Achievement Award.

The awards were presented October 6 in a ceremony at the annual Housing Washington conference in Spokane.

“We are thrilled to shine the spotlight on these leaders and visionaries, who have not only improved the lives of thousands of Washington residents, but also inspired all of us with their examples,” said Karen Miller, chair of the Housing Finance Commission.



From left: **Doris Koo** (Margaret M. Sevy Lifetime Achievement Award); Susan Duren (accepting on behalf of **Dinah Thoreson**); **Billie Heath**; **Bill Rumpf**; **Faith Li Pettis**; **M.A. Leonard** (Margaret M. Sevy Lifetime Achievement Award); **Cindy Algeo**. Photo: Alec Miller

2015 Friends of Housing:

- **Bill Rumpf:** Improving health via housing is a mission for Bill, the executive director of [Mercy Housing Northwest](#) and leader of the statewide Affordable and Public Housing Health Care Partnership Workgroup. He is also a former leader of the City of Seattle Office of Housing.
- **Faith Li Pettis:** A “Washington Super Lawyer” and partner at Pacifica Law Group, Faith Li Pettis is also chair of the state [Affordable Housing Advisory Board](#) where she led the development of the 2015 Housing Needs Assessment. In 2015, she co-led the Seattle Mayor’s [Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda](#) committee, which developed 67 bold recommendations for Seattle’s affordable-housing crisis.
- **Cindy Algeo:** Cindy is currently the director of [Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium](#), continuing a 20-year legacy of working in affordable housing in Spokane. Cindy has built SLIHC into a strong organization that supports policy and funding to address homelessness and create affordable housing in the Spokane area.
- **Dinah Thoreson:** For over 20 years, this experienced banker has utilized her broad knowledge of community development lending to provide financial support for the affordable housing community. She helped lead the [Housing Development Consortium](#) and Impact Capital and is active on the board of [Mt. Baker Housing](#).
- **Billie Heath:** Since 1987, rural communities across western states have benefitted from Billie Heath’s technical assistance through the [Rural Community Assistance Corporation \(RCAC\)](#). With Billie’s guidance, more than 2,800 low-income families in Washington state have used the USDA Mutual Self-Help Housing program to earn an estimated \$28.2 million in home equity.

2015 Margaret M. Sevy Lifetime Achievement Awards:

- **M.A. Leonard:** As a developer, investor, advisor, and mentor in affordable housing, M.A. Leonard has reached urban and rural communities all over Washington by empowering and guiding a wide range of organizations over the past several decades. She is vice president and Pacific Northwest market leader for [Enterprise Community Partners](#), a nationwide nonprofit that funds and advocates for affordable housing. She also served two terms on the state Housing Finance Commission, ending in 2015.
- **Doris Koo:** As leader of the [Seattle Housing Authority](#) during the crucial years of replacing the city’s crumbling public-housing projects, Doris Koo’s creativity and collaboration helped to transform areas such as NewHolly and Rainier Vista into safe, beautiful communities. She was also executive director of Enterprise

Community Partners, where she led efforts to rebuild hurricane-devastated housing in New Orleans. Recently retired, she is a consultant to the [Yesler Community Collaborative](#) and a member of the national AARP board.

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](#) 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 275,000 affordable homes across the state, while contributing more than \$42.5 billion and 240,000 jobs to the economy.



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