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NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA

For immediate release

Teacher and community volunteer earns Berger Faculty Community Service Award

A teacher who believes in partnerships between university professors, students, agencies, and society is this year's recipient of the Sydney L. and Sadelle Berger Faculty Community Service Award. Dr. Kathy Elpers, associate professor of social work, received the award during the Bower Suhrheinrich School of Education and Human Services Honors Program at the University of Southern Indiana on March 21, 2005.

A faculty member at USI for 17 years, Elpers served as a social worker assisting people professionally 15 years prior to the USI appointment. She has dedicated her academic and clinical career to service to Southwestern Indiana.

Faculty colleagues agree that Kathy Elpers has demonstrated to her students the value of community involvement by exposing them to community organizations. "By getting students involved, Kathy helps advance professional development of students and is generating a new level of contributing citizens for Southwestern Indiana," said Dr. Peggy Shields, associate professor of marketing. The award is presented by the Academic Affairs committee at USI.

Elpers has served on the Board of Directors of Catholic Charities, YWCA, and Ohio Valley Hospice. She also has served on projects and committees, often in a leadership role, for the Indiana Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and in 1991 was recognized as NASW Region 8 Social Worker of the Year. She has served as chair of the Southwestern Indiana United Way's Youth Guidance Board, member of the Deaconess Cross Point Advisory Board, Evansville Youth Coalition, and, Perry County Welfare Board among others. She is a board member for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate). In this capacity, she is involved in board and volunteer training, so juveniles receive proper treatment in the legal system.

With grant money from the John A Hartford Foundation, the USI Social Work Department added geriatric information into the social work curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to increase students' knowledge about aging as well as their interest in working with older adults. Elpers serves as faculty advisor to STELLAR (Students and Elders Linking Around Relationships), a student group focusing on building relationships between students and seniors. With STELLAR participation, she developed projects involving USI students and the retired sisters living at Seton Residence and with residents living at the Rathbone Retirement Community.

The Berger Faculty Community Service award is given annually at USI. James Cavera, journalist and local social worker, wrote in support of the Elpers nomination, saying, "I had the privilege of knowing Sadelle Berger and her work, and I strongly feel that Professor Elpers embodies the spirit of this particular award." The Sydney and Sadelle Berger Faculty Community Service Award is made possible by the Bergers' son Charles and his wife Leslie.