

Hattie Holmes – Paralegal, Waterloo Regional Office, January 14, 1975

Margaret Mead once said, “Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For, indeed, that is all who ever have.” Hattie ‘Delores’ Holmes is one of those caring people and she changes the world for individuals in our community with her work every day. She started with Black Hawk County Legal Aid, initially serving as a secretary/receptionist. Hattie was trained to become a paralegal and assisted initially with divorce cases. She has been with the organization for 45 years. She works with clients who are not only struggling financially, but mentally and physically; and she does it with compassion and perseverance. Hattie makes sure that every single client she works with feels validated and receives the support they deserve.

Hattie completed her higher education at the former Gates Business College after graduating from Waterloo’s own East High School in 1965. She moved to Waterloo when she was young and has been a pillar in our community, offering a unique perspective into the lives of our most vulnerable citizens. She utilizes her vast knowledge on disability, income maintenance, and Medicaid law to guide clients through administrative processes. Hattie has helped thousands of Iowans, achieving benefit awards totaling more than \$3 million in her time at Iowa Legal Aid; benefits that are essential to survival for most of our clients.

Hattie is an advocate for the rights of people with disabilities and mental illness. Even when other agencies in the community are hesitant to work with someone whose mental health issues make it difficult for that person to effectively communicate in a calm and reasonable manner, Hattie doesn’t even consider declining assistance an option. She works each and every day to help people in our community to get the assistance they need.

For forty-five years, Hattie has worked tirelessly to aid those people that have nowhere else to turn. Whether it be through her work with Iowa Legal Aid, or her involvement in the church playing the organ, Hattie gives almost all her time and effort into improving the lives of everyone in the Cedar Valley. She sacrifices her time and resources for the greater good of others. She is an asset to our community.

Hattie is someone who sets the bar very high for expectations of advocates serving persons in poverty struggling to make their way through the legal system. Her resilience is evident in the recent pandemic. That transition was filled with technological challenges for all of

us and she persevered. She has our respect and admiration through her work and endurance through all these years!