PRESENTATION OF THE 2017 JOAN WALD BAKEN AWARD

Division of Physical, Health, and Multiple Disabilities Council for Exceptional Children



The Joan Wald Baken Award

- Established in 1997 to honor the memory of the devoted member of DPHD who dedicated herself to individuals with physical and health disabilities.
- •Up to two awards are given annually to individuals whose accomplishments represent exemplary advocacy and educational practice.
- The recipient must be involved in directly impacting individuals with physical and health disabilities in schools, hospitals, clinics, homes

2017 Recipients of the Joan Wald Baken Award

Dr. Sherry Best



Ph.D. - 1995 University of California, Riverside Special Education/Educational Psychology

- Professor, California State University, Los Angeles
- Coordinator, Education Specialist Credential/Masters Programs in Physical and Health Impairments, California State University, Los Angeles

- Dr. Best began her career as a graduate assistant and later a teacher at Frank G. Lanterman State Hospital and Developmental Center in Pomona, California.
- She has worked as a classroom teacher of students with physical and health impairments and later as an instructor and professor at UC Riverside and California State University, Los Angeles.

- Dr. Best consults with numerous school districts, hospitals, and early intervention centers.
- She has been awarded nearly a dozen grants and is the recipient of at least 8 different professional awards.
- Dr. Best has authored three books, over 25 different chapters, 9 professional articles, and has presented at nearly 80 different conferences and professional trainings.

- Dr. Best has been a member of various state and national organizations for over three decades.
- She has served as past president of the Division for Physical and Health Disabilities (DPHD) and the California Association for Physical and Health Impairments (CAPHI)

Making a difference...

- Quotes from students, friends, and colleagues:
 - Dr. Best is truly an inspiration to aspiring special education teachers as her passion for educating students with disabilities is evident in her teaching, professional leadership and collaboration with outside agencies and school districts. She has inspired and produced a generation of special education teachers.
 - Three years ago, I approached Dr. Best about having the Charter College of Education partner with my school district to provide work experiences for transition age students with physical, health, and multiple disabilities. Dr. Best willingly and enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to collaborate on this project. Dr. Best is a caring and committed professor who continues to support the teachers she has trained even after they have graduated.

- Dr. Best helped me to discover within myself the passion and determination to: research things I did not know or fully understand to ensure that I can best serve each of my students; to inspire my students to strive for their own highest level of independence; and to aspire to empower as many students as possible on their own communication, ambulation, life skills, and so much more.
- Dr. Sherry Best is truly an inspirational and tireless advocate for persons with physical and health impairments. Her continued efforts dedicated to improving the lives of students with physical and health impairments have served to awaken the same passion in the countless number of teachers she has mentored throughout the years.

- To be a "Bestie" (student of Dr. Best) is to expand one's knowledge in the field of OI/PHI exponentially. She inspires and challenges in the same breath.
- Dr. Best is remarkable in her ability to weave her practical experience of working with students with physical, health, and multiple disabilities into her intellectual pursuit of best practices in the field, and to share this lifelong passion with those of us lucky enough to have studied under her.
- I have never met a more passionate person for students with physical and health impairments. She is such an inspiration and I am honored to be a former student and now friend. She has the ability to encourage her students to grow and pursue the lifelong journey of advocating for students with orthopedic impairments.

- 1. Sherry comes from ancestors who were farmers and she channels this background into her mad passion for gardening. She keeps a vegetable garden and enjoys tending a pretty big rose garden – about 60 mature specimens on her property with her husband John. Several years ago Sherry and John added chickens to their "suburban farm" and enjoy the fresh eggs.
- 2. Related to that farming heritage Sherry loves to cook and to can. She cans tomatoes and makes jams and jellies from the fruit she and John grow on their property. If you ever visit you'll get a "guest gift" of lemon marmalade and pomegranate jelly yum.
- 3. Sherry and John are into home restoration. They have a California bungalow grove house built in 1908 and are slowing restoring it to its former glory. This means paint scraping, wallpapering, and painting. It's all good.

4. Approaching retirement, Sherry decided to channel some of her energy in another direction and joined her local Historical Society. One thing led to another and she is now its President – organizing activities, staging local home tours, making new neighborhood friends, and getting involved with her community on a new and deeper level. She's discovered that there is a lot of history in one's community.

5. Sherry and John love to camp! Two summers ago they camped up the California, Oregon, and Washington coasts then made their way across the Olympic Peninsula to meet up with Sherry's daughter in Seattle. It may be time to shift from a tent to a camper. We'll see.





