

Melanie Grimes Receives Susanne C. Adams Award for 2018

By Linda Gibson

The 25th recipient of the Susanne C. Adams Award is Melanie E. Grimes, a TMCA Credentialed Distinguished Mediator, past-president of TAM, a former chair of a TAM Conference, and current Board Chair of the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association. The award was created in 1997 to honor its first recipient, Susanne Adams, and to recognize exceptional and outstanding efforts in promoting and furthering the use of mediation in Texas.

Susanne Adams firmly believed that mediation is far superior to litigation, and fiercely held to her principles concerning mediation and its role in our litigious society. Through her efforts in the 1980's and early 1990's she helped define the role of mediator as a peacemaker and a facilitator – as someone who brings parties together to resolve their differences in a safe, calm atmosphere. Her good friend Suzanne Duvall once said, "When I think of Susanne, I remember most her loyalty, tenacity, and her uncanny ability to bring us together: attorneys, psychologists, social workers, police officers, or any other profession. Her inclusion made us one profession, that of mediator."

This year's award recipient exhibits those same characteristics: **loyalty** to TAM, to the mediation profession, to her clients, and to her colleagues; **tenacity** to take on the tough jobs and get them done, often working quietly behind the scenes to help bring about needed change; and **inclusion** – the ability to bring us all together, asking for input from all sides and really listening to what all have to say – striving for consensus, not just trying to win. In this time of so much contention among Americans at all economic and social levels – even here among fellow mediators – Melanie uses her uncanny ability to bring people together at her mediations, at TAM, and at TMCA.

Before becoming a mediator, Melanie spent 15 years in senior- and executive-level corporate management, and she brings this business know-how to mediation. She improved TAM "branding" as President, creating a new TAM logo and redesigning our website. She also regularly lends her expertise in the creation of the TAM newsletter and the Conference Program.

Melanie is dedicated to TAM and to furthering the mission of TAM. She is TAM's representative to the TMCA Board, and is currently the Chair of that board. Last year's Adams Award recipient, John Palmer, said in his letter of nomination, "Melanie has a drive and passion for mediation, and for furthering our profession." He added that she has promoted the quality of mediation by recruiting new TMCA credential holders, helping improve the ease of TMCA's renewal and application processes, and redesigning a more user- and administrator-friendly TMCA website.

He ended the letter of nomination by saying, "When I think of the Susanne

Adams award, and what the award means, I think of Melanie: Melanie's personality (loving and tenacious), dedication to helping people (willing to help newcomers to mediation), and commitment to cementing us as ethically driven mediation professionals. She has tenaciously brought LGBT issues to our attention in TMCA and TAM meetings and conferences. Melanie is always trying to think of new ways to help mediators improve our profession and how TAM and TMCA can be a vehicle to help meet this goal. Melanie is smart and sophisticated, and despite this, she knows to look for advice and to change her position if it is best for the profession."

Melanie Grimes is, indeed, the ultimate peacemaker and a very deserving recipient of the 2018 Susanne C. Adams Award.