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As its role gains increased importance...

Connecticut Commission on Aging Elects Officers' Slate

The Connecticut Commission on Aging (CoA) has elected its new slate of officers to one-year terms ending in September 2010.

The slate, approved at the CoA's September meeting includes:

Christine M. Lewis, MSW, of South Windsor, reelected to serve as chair; William L. Eddy, of Simsbury, vice-chair; Mary Ellen Klinck, of East Haddam, secretary; Richard C. Memmott, Sr., of West Haven, treasurer; and Sharon Gesek, of Seymour, member-at-large.

The officers are among 17 unpaid, volunteer board members from communities throughout Connecticut.

"The recent U.S. Census Bureau survey revealing that Connecticut is now the third oldest state in the nation makes the CoA's role more critical than ever," said CoA Executive Director Julia Evans Starr. "Our board's leaders will help ensure that during these complex times our priorities are highly focused, results-oriented, fiscally responsible and achievable."

Christine Lewis, Chair

With more than 30 years of experience in state government, Chris was appointed to the CoA by Senate Majority Leader Martin M. Looney in 2003. She is the former director of the Elderly Services Division of the Department of Social Services. She was instrumental in developing the state's Elderly Nutrition Program, the Area Agencies on Aging and the Statewide Caregiver and Alzheimer's Respite program.

William L. Eddy, Vice-Chair

A member of the CoA since 2005, Bill was recently reappointed to a four-year term by Gov. M. Jodi Rell. He formerly served as the CoA's treasurer. As a member, he has volunteered many hours at the State Capitol and led key special projects. He has received Connecticut Community Care Inc.'s Myra H. Kerr Individual Advocacy Award; the AARP Andrus Award for Community Service; and the CoA Appreciation Award. He is a retired financial services industry senior executive.

Mary Ellen Klinck, Secretary

Mary Ellen served as commissioner of the state's former Department on Aging from 1983 to 1991. Prior to being elected CoA secretary, she served as the CoA board's member-at-large. A CoA member since 2005, she was recently reappointed to a four-year term by House Majority Leader Denise W. Merrill. She is a member of the East Haddam Committee on Aging and served on the Governor's Task Force on Alzheimer's disease. She has earned awards for her

volunteer work from numerous organizations including the Alzheimer's Association of Greater Hartford, United Way, March of Dimes and American Heart Association.

Richard C. Memmott, Sr., Treasurer

A CoA member since 2005, Dick was recently reappointed to a four-year term by House Minority Leader Lawrence F. Cafero, Jr. Dick is director of Masonicare Community Services at Masonicare in Wallingford. He provides outreach to older adults and makes presentations to civic, religious, community and fraternal groups and organizes community programs and symposiums. He is a member of the Advisory Council and the Professional Assessment Committee of the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging and a statewide CHOICES counselor.

Sharon Gesek, Member-at-Large

Director of Elderly Services in Southbury, Sharon was recently reappointed to a four-year term on the CoA by State Senate Minority Leader John McKinney (R-28th). She is the former director of the Monroe Senior Center and has been a member of the commission since 2005. She is a past member of the Community Awareness Program for Seniors, Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel, Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging and currently is the Vice-Chairman of the Connecticut Coalition on Aging.

The state Capitol-based CoA was created by the General Assembly in 1993 to help policymakers prepare for Connecticut's surging population of older adults.

In carrying out its mission, the commission leads public/private-sector efforts to promote and improve public- policy on older adult issues including health care, long-term care, transportation, financial security, housing, employment, legal assistance and many others.

The agency fills a unique role within state government by building bridges, opening dialogue and seeking solutions between influential groups including the Legislative and Executive branches of state government, local government, the business community, state and local organizations that serve critical needs of older citizens and statewide public/private sector coalitions such as the Connecticut Elder Action Network and Connecticut Long-Term Care Advisory Council.

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