



The CENTER for
VICTIMS of TORTURE

IT STARTS
WITH HOPE

30 YEARS

2015 Eclipse Award Honoree Biographies

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The individuals listed below are recipients of the 2015 Eclipse Award for their roles in establishing, guiding and developing the Center for Victims of Torture in its early years as an organization.

Barbara Frey

Barbara Frey stepped up during the very early days of the Center for Victims of Torture's existence, working as a volunteer in the role of managing director. Her efforts and leadership helped establish the operations of the organization and organized the staff. She led an important transition of the organization from a volunteer-based model to a professional staff structure that paved the way for the growth and expansion that came quickly in the following years.

Today, Barbara Frey is director of the Human Rights Program in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota, where she is a professor, advocate and scholar. Her history of leadership in human rights work includes serving as executive director of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights and membership on the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, including service as Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission.

Samuel Heins

Mr. Heins was with CVT from the very beginning, serving as chair of the Task Force Coordination Committee as a member of the original Governor's Task Force on the Feasibility of a Minnesota Center for Victims of Torture. Mr. Heins served as the first chair of CVT's board, from 1985-87. He was instrumental in setting up the legal organization and a key relationship with the University of Minnesota that included not only a plan of work, but an important rental agreement that allowed CVT to begin offering healing services to torture survivors out of a house on the campus.

Today, Sam Heins is vice chair on CVT's board as well as senior partner at Heins Mills & Olson. His history of human rights advocacy includes founding Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, and he has been recognized with awards including the Minnesota Governor's Honor Award for International Human Rights Activities and the Advocates' Don and Arvonne Fraser Human Rights Award.

Rudy Perpich, Jr. and the late Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich

Mr. Perpich, Jr.'s role in the creation of the Center for Victims of Torture is many people's favorite part of the origin story. As a young person, he provided the inspiration for the entire undertaking. On a visit home during break from law school in the 1980s, Mr. Perpich asked his father, Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich (1928-95), what he was doing for human rights.

In response, Gov. Perpich set up a task force to conduct research into gaps in human rights work to see what would be feasible in Minnesota. This task force returned with a recommendation to further examine multidisciplinary rehabilitative care for torture survivors. The task force members, several of whom are Eclipse Award recipients today, analyzed the few global resources they could find available then for survivors of torture. They quickly found that the need for these services was shockingly large and unmet.

Gov. Perpich's task force ultimately recommended establishing the Center for Victims of Torture in Minnesota. A key principle that the team found in their analysis work came from the Copenhagen International Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims, which the task force noted in the May 1985 feasibility report: "Treatment is based upon the philosophy that torture victims are 'normal' people who have experienced a 'normal reaction' to an extremely abnormal situation."

This concept was embedded into the founding principles of CVT, along with other core values that set the stage for a new organization that would focus on the individual, extending physical, mental health, social and legal care for torture survivors as well as their families.

Terry Saario

In the early days of CVT's existence, numerous attempts were made to obtain the necessary funding to meet the mental and physical health needs of torture survivors and to set up a working organization. A grant proposal for funding was submitted to funders again and again, only to be declined. On receiving another rejection, the team would scale back the financial request in hopes of securing funding from the next place. It was rejected again.

Finally, when the team brought the grant request to Terry Saario, it was very modest. Ms. Saario, then head of the Northwest Area Foundation, reviewed it carefully. She assessed the mission of the organization. She then ripped up the document and instructed the team to bring back a comprehensive and visionary proposal that would begin to move the organization forward for growth. Ms. Saario next recommended to the Foundation's board a multi-year grant to support CVT's initial growth and organizational development, and she got the board's approval.

Ms. Saario has been recognized for leadership in her roles on numerous corporate and non-profit boards, including CVT's. Today, she is noted as a philanthropist and global leader for social change and economic development.

Robert Sands

Robert Sands' leadership was an integral part of establishing CVT; in fact, he wrote the original Articles of Incorporation for the organization in 1985. He was one of the members of the Governor's Task Force on the Feasibility of a Minnesota Center for Victims of Torture, serving as chair of the legal committee for that team. In addition, he obtained CVT's tax exempt status and negotiated a lease with the University of Minnesota that was very important to torture survivors: CVT's move from a hospital setting into a house on campus allowed survivors to feel welcome and safe. They came to the house in large numbers.

Mr. Sands remained a key supporter of the organization over the years, serving as chair of the board and encouraging the organization to undertake its first conference. Mr. Sands was also founding director and president of the Advocates for Human Rights and partner at Fredrikson and Byron.

Robert Stein

Bob Stein was a founding director of CVT, and he served as co-chair of the original Governor's Task Force on the Feasibility of a Minnesota Center for Victims of Torture that recommended creation of the organization. Then dean of the University of Minnesota Law School, he led the team in investigating needs, feasibility and basic operations of a center dedicated to healing the wounds of torture, ultimately guiding the creation of the organization.

Mr. Stein served as executive director and chief operating officer of the American Bar Association and currently is on the University of Minnesota Law School faculty as Everett Fraser Professor of Law. His legal expertise was instrumental in helping the Center for Victims of Torture undertake its organizational development and begin its path of growth and expansion.

Tom Triplett

When the task force that resulted in the creation of CVT was established, Tom Triplett was planning agency director in Gov. Perpich's office, with a reputation as a person who got things done. Mr. Triplett served as chair for CVT's board of directors for three years beginning in 1987. He led the board in recruiting and hiring Doug Johnson as the first executive director. In addition, Mr. Triplett undertook the first capital campaign to renovate the healing center and provided leadership to the organization as it began adding services and strengthening its fundraising practices.

Mr. Triplett's history of leadership in the public sector is extensive, including serving as commissioner of the Minnesota state departments of Finance, Planning and Revenue, and as deputy counsel to the Minnesota Attorney General. Today, Mr. Triplett is emeritus board member for CVT and principal at Triplett Consulting, LLC.

David Weissbrodt

Many people attribute Minnesota's vibrant, global reputation for action and results in human rights to the inspiration and actions of David Weissbrodt. In the mid-80s, he was already active with Amnesty International, U.S.A. when he signed on to the original Governor's Task Force on the Feasibility of a Minnesota Center for Victims of Torture. He went on the exploratory trip with that team to the Copenhagen torture survivor rehabilitation center, and wrote the memo recommending creation of a multidisciplinary center in Minnesota.

Mr. Weissbrodt served on the board of directors for CVT for 22 years, from its first board until 2007. He provided leadership through many years of growth and expansion and was instrumental in setting up CVT's office in Washington, D.C.

Today, Mr. Weissbrodt is an emeritus director for CVT. He is a noted professor at the University of Minnesota Law School, whose work in the field of international human rights law is widely published. His background includes service on the UN Sub-commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and designation as the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of non-citizens, a role he held for three years. He also was selected as a member of the Board of Trustees of the U.N. Trust Fund for Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

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