



London Mitchell

Spirit Award 2024

The annual Spirit Award recognizes an individual for a lifetime of service on behalf of persons with developmental disabilities. It is our way of honoring those who worked so tirelessly to improve the quality of life for individuals with dd.

Tonight, we are proud to honor a man whose unwavering dedication, professionalism, and compassion have left an indelible mark on our community—Mr. London Mitchell.

London, or "Lon," as many of us affectionately know him around here, began his remarkable journey with the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities on September 21st, 1987. At the time, Lucas DD operated out of 11 different buildings and Lon had no experience with the I/DD system. In fact, working for the Board was the first time he had ever interacted with someone with a disability.

But from day one, he committed himself to uplifting the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families through tireless advocacy, thoughtful communication, and heartfelt public service.

It was those individuals and their families, he said, that inspired his work, day after day, year after year, during his 34-year career at Lucas DD.

Throughout his tenure as Public Information Manager, Lon became known as the voice and heart behind so many of the Board's efforts. He led numerous committees focused on promoting the rights, dignity, and potential of those we serve. He helped shape positive public perceptions and foster a deeper understanding of the Board's mission within the broader community.

Lon's impact extended far beyond the office walls. He worked together with community partners on countless projects—producing educational videos, organizing public speaking events, and building bridges between the Board and the community at large. He helped launch the Ohio Public Images network so that other county boards across the state could have access to shared media of individuals with developmental disabilities.

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His strong media relations, trusted reputation, and ability to communicate with empathy and clarity helped ensure that the voice of individuals with developmental disabilities was not just heard, but respected and celebrated.

Lon managed everything from the Board's website and social media, all of which were launched during his tenure, to multiple successful levy campaigns. He ensured that vital information reached those who needed it most, always with accuracy, integrity, and care. In addition to his outstanding service to the Board, Lon has had a distinguished career of more than 50 years in radio broadcast journalism.

While Lon is going into his 4th year of retirement from the Board, he remains an active participant on the Toledo-Lucas County Commission on Disabilities, and host of the "Staying in Contact" Podcast on the Toledo Free Press website and wherever you get your podcasts. My guess, however, is that his favorite part of retirement is keeping up with his 10 grandkids!

Lon, this is just a small expression of our deepest gratitude for all you have done for the Board and the entire I/DD system in the State of Ohio. Your legacy will continue to inspire, inform, and elevate our community for years to come. Congratulations on this Spirit Award, well earned through your decades of service, unwavering commitment, and enduring belief in the power of communication to create positive change.