

Macomb Feminist Network

Writing Women into History 2025 Honorees

Julia Albarracin-Green, an immigrant herself, has been particularly concerned about the welfare of Dreamers, students brought to the U.S. as undocumented children and, who as young adults, remain undocumented and in danger of deportation. Aware of this cohort of students, in 2017 Albarracin-Green founded the Western Illinois Dreamers to raise emergency funds for them, providing legal counseling, educational options and scholarships, housing and resettlement assistance, eviction prevention support, and health resources. She continues to serve Dreamers but a wider population of immigrants as well through a network of welcome centers, her publications, and her work as a member of the Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes.

Charlene Callison has been active in the Macomb community since she arrived in 1967 to teach at Western Illinois University. Her background in fashion merchandising led her to develop partnerships with Macomb shop owners and bring town and gown together while also sponsoring internships, field trips, and scholarships to strengthen opportunities for her students. Her activism encompasses the arts and women's health, but also service in her church that ranges from organizing rummage sales to organizing fundraising lunches and dinners. Charlene's leadership is evident in how she brings volunteers together, holds them to high performance levels, and creates congenial, efficient task-oriented mini communities . She does everything with unmistakable style, flair, color, and generosity.

Lynne Campbell has a long successful career in newspaper publishing, having worked in almost every capacity in that field. When she returned to the region in which she grew up, she had the experience and skills to found her own newspaper, the Community News Brief (CNB). To fill the need for local news coverage, she began with a free community newsletter but quickly expanded to a full-fledged newspaper with local reporters helping her produce Tuesday and Friday editions of the CNB each week. Subscribers can count on a full range of stories to let them know what is happening here and now. Along with her commitment to countering a rural Illinois news desert, Lynne is serving the community by opening a space for independent local artist-entrepreneurs to market their work.

Patti Hutinger, began her career at Western Illinois University in child growth and development and continued in that field for over 40 years, tweaking it as she saw the need. When she recognized the needs of infants to three-year-olds and saw that education for them, especially those with a disability, was virtually non-existent, she made it her mission to change that. She founded the Macomb 0-3 Regional Project to reach these children and their parents, established Sharing Centers for them, and developed an interdisciplinary program to prepare staff to meet their educational needs. To realize her out-of-the-box ideas, Patti became an adept grant writer, earning state and federal grants and turning her 0-3 Project, for example, into a demonstration project in rural areas across the country.