

Darlene MacDonald, MSW, Non-practicing MCSW Member Executive Member-at-Large

Term: 2020-2023 (2nd term)
Region: Capital
Committees: Executive

Biography



With more than 30 years of experience in child welfare, Darlene MacDonald is a skilled and steady leader known for her professional, fair and collaborative approach to improving the lives of children, youth, and families. She has a proven track record of successful innovation and organizational change.

Darlene holds a Master of Social Work degree from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She began her Manitoba social work career at Winnipeg Child and Family Services in 1982 as a social worker in child welfare moving on to serve in a variety of roles including, chief executive officer, program manager, director of service and area director. Darlene was appointed and served as Manitoba's Children's Advocate from 2011-2017.

As Children's Advocate, an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly, Darlene focused on the vital role of non-partisanship in achieving the best outcomes for vulnerable children and youth. She completed her second and final term as Children's Advocate in April 2017 shortly after the announcement of improvements her Office had been seeking to the stand-alone legislation first introduced in 2015. During her terms as Children's Advocate, Darlene was active on a number of Boards, both provincial and national, with a focus on the well-being of children and youth.

In addition to her busy work life, Darlene was an active Board member of the Manitoba Institute of Social Workers, precursor of the College, and the Canadian Association of Social Workers, previously filling executive positions on both boards. Her work on the CASW board resulted in the establishment of a Children's Issues Interest Group, of which she sat as founding Chairperson from 2005-2009. Darlene served as Vice President on both the MIRS and CASW Boards. She served as President of CASW from 2009-2011, seeing the national organization through a challenging period of organizational change and renewal. In 2016, Darlene's impact

on the profession was recognized when she received the CASW Distinguished Social Worker Award for Manitoba.

Darlene continues to be active on the MCSW Board and is the Manitoba Director for the Canadian Association of Social Workers. Darlene has been appointed to the Board of the General Child and Family Services Authority and continues her volunteer work with St. Charles Parish. Darlene and her family live in Winnipeg and her husband Jim recently retired as program manager in Manitoba's child welfare system. Their daughter Emma is currently working with Winnipeg Child and Family Services and is a registered member of the College. They share their home with Winston, a small but mighty dog.