

## Rebecca “Becky” Weichhand Honored Posthumously with NCFA’s 2020 Babineaux Award for Foster Care

(ALEXANDRIA, VA, July 28, 2020) – National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is pleased to name the late Becky Weichhand of Stevensville, Michigan as the **2020** recipient of the **Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award** for her passionate and effective personal and career advocacy in support of adoption and her efforts to improve the lives of children and youth in foster care who are in need of permanent, nurturing families.



Becky served on staff at the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) for almost 10 years until her death in November 2018, including four years as its executive director. Both before joining CCAI and during her long tenure on staff, Becky demonstrated a heart for adoption and for all children in need of permanency. At the time of her passing she had become one of America’s most astute leaders in adoption and foster care policy, serving as a regular advisor to members of Congress on legislative and public policies related to adoption and foster care.

In addition, Becky fostered engagement with other stakeholder organizations, such as NCFA, in support of legislation that benefited children and families in the U.S. and globally. But perhaps the greatest part of her legacy is the impact she had in the lives of hundreds of foster youth. Becky invested herself in the lives of alumni of the foster care system, serving as their mentor, encourager, and advocate. As the executive director of CCAI, Becky oversaw the acclaimed *Foster Youth Internship* program which placed current and former foster youth in internships on Capitol Hill. Under her leadership the program flourished and stands as a hallmark testimony to Becky’s tireless dedication to empowering foster youth.



“Becky Weichhand was a good friend to NCFA, and we’re proud to note that she served her legal internship with NCFA in 2007. From that short time of working with Becky at NCFA, it was not surprising to see Becky translate her intellect and passion for children and families to become a national and international champion for children and youth in foster care. She accomplished more in her short



career than many do in a lifetime. Becky was a person of very strong faith, who put her faith to action and most certainly was the ‘good and faithful servant’ she endeavored to be,” said NCFA’s president, Chuck Johnson.

### **About Foster Care**

According to the [most recent report](#) from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (FY 18, Oct 1, 2018 – Sept 30, 2019), there are currently 437,283 children in U.S. foster care. Of these children, more than 125,000 are waiting to be adopted. The number of waiting children has reached a 10-year high.

Almost 18,000 youth aged out of foster care during that year and will navigate adulthood without the financial, educational, social, and psychological support they need to thrive. This is a national tragedy that must be addressed, as the outcomes for foster youth who age out of care are bleak. With no stable support system, these young adults are at high risk of homelessness, substance abuse, unplanned pregnancy, and incarceration. A common commitment to permanent, loving families for *all children, everywhere*, united the passion and work of NCFA and Becky Weichhand. We are honored to have been colleagues in that effort.

### **About The Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award**

Established in 2015, the Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award honors individuals and organizations that have gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure children experience the love and stability that come with a forever family. This award is given to those who have demonstrated the most selfless commitment to providing resources, education, and leadership to address the many challenges including parent recruitment, training, and support services necessary to give children safe, stable, and loving adoptive families. The award is named for Adoption Hall of Fame recipients Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux who cared for more than 100 children in foster care during their decades-long tenure as foster and adoptive parents in Louisiana.

### **Past Recipients of the Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award include:**

2016: Former foster youth Sixto Cancel and Nicole Marchman

2017: NBC4 Washington’s Barbara Harrison and Mississippi’s Executive Director of the Division of Family and Children’s Services Dr. David Chandler

2018: Lifelong adoption advocate Joe Kroll

2019: Country music artist Jimmy Wayne; Author and Co-Founder of Comfort Cases Robert Scheer

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### **About National Council For Adoption**

Founded in 1980, National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is a leading authoritative voice for adoption and is passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family. NCFA’s nonprofit work promotes a culture of adoption through education, research, advocacy and collaboration that aims to serve children, expectant and birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and adoption professionals. [www.adoptioncouncil.org](http://www.adoptioncouncil.org)

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