

Harriet Gleason Van Deursen 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award



Harriet Gleason Van Deursen served as the Sex Equity Coordinator for the state of Washington from 1982-2001. As a teacher and later as a Home and Family Life program specialist for the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Harriet understood that family roles in the home and outside of the home were changing for the better. Females and males did not have to follow strict societal pressure to restrict their career merely based on their gender. This made her transition to the Commission for Vocational Education as the Sex Equity Coordinator ideal. Harriet oversaw many successful initiatives during her tenure including an increased coordination between secondary and community and technical college programs; and the development of the Northwest Center for Equity and Diversity, directed by Joan Tucker, which made equity resources and materials available across the state of Washington and the U.S.

Harriet worked with the Community Colleges of Spokane on the popular “The Road Less Traveled” which NAPE still uses today, and also with Cathi Rodgveller and Seattle Public Schools on “IGNITE” projects that addressed equity issues with the help of businesses, communities, local school districts, and community and technical colleges.

She also served in several national leadership roles including President of the Career and Technical Educational Equity Council (CTEEC) where she worked with the executive officer team to 1) plan the annual PDI now coordinated by NAPE; 2) plan the ACTE Administration division/CTEEC sponsored breakout sessions; and 3) develop Perkins Act reauthorization position papers and strategies to educate policy makers to retain the sex equity set-asides. Interestingly, Harriet was one of the original CTEEC officers who formed NAPE by creating bylaws; developing other structural documents; and marketing the membership to her local sex equity coordinators and state director.

Harriet’s dedication and leadership over her 37 years working in Washington State in career and technical education transformed the way schools valued education. During that time she has seen the transition of women into the work place but recognizes that much work lies ahead.