

Mrs. Frances Smallwood was nominated for the MLB Award by Mr. Melvin Walker and Dr. Laurel Standley, due to her 30+ year commitment of service and partnership with the Deaf Community. It was her demonstration of all that Mr. Walker and Dr. Standley personally value in the field that lead led them to nominate her for an award of such a lifetime of true professional distinction. There are few in our profession of a comparable stature to hers and it is our belief that ALRID should recognize her contribution to the state of Alabama and indeed the interpreting profession as a whole. “\She has truly worked a life time to improve the profession of interpreting while always advocating for the rights of Deaf Alabamians. We have chosen to list a few excerpts from the MLB nomination letters.

Regarding Ms. Smallwood’s support of and interaction with the Deaf Community:

“One of Mama Lou's most famous quotes, if not the most famous, is "Get With The Deaf!" Frances lives by this motto as she can be found regularly at most Deaf events. Frances is always active on committees for the Huntsville Chapter of the Alabama Association of the Deaf. Frances like other recipients of this prestigious award gave of her time and talents during the passage of the Alabama Licensure Law and ASL as a foreign language.”

“As a young child I remember Frances and her father being active members of the Huntsville Chapter of ALRID which at one point was the sole RID chapter of Alabama.”

“She has interpreted for my family during celebrations and during times of grief without concern for who to send the bill to. She and I have teamed in different situations for members of our community where I knew she was there to make sure communication was effective even if it meant it was on her dime.”

Regarding Mrs. Smallwood’s support of and interaction with the interpreting community:

“From the time she moved back to Alabama she has been an essential part of the foundation for the Huntsville Chapter of ALRID. She has served on the ALRID board in various capacities including Treasurer and President of a local chapter. She has volunteered her time on more than one occasion to work on the bylaws committee to ensure ALRID was operating well within its scope.”

“In her role as HRID President she has promoted the field by encouraging the chapter to offer workshop opportunities in North Alabama, impacting a great many people from outlying areas and drawing in people from outside the state. The Huntsville chapter is by far the most active local RID chapter I have ever known and I feel confident in saying that it would not be so were it not for Frances' involvement.”

“During the current trend of our national office where the local chapters of the interpreting association don't seem to be valued as they were in times past Frances has been and continues to be an advocate for local grassroots efforts.”

Regarding Ms. Smallwood's interpreting experience and skill:

"Frances Smallwood is the owner of Deaf Access, Inc. Frances is celebrating her 30th year as a certified member of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Additionally, she has been the staff interpreter for AIDB and Vocational Rehabilitation before founding her own interpreting company, Deaf Access."

"I have known Ms. Smallwood for two and half years and have worked with her and, more importantly, for her during this time. She has demonstrated unwavering integrity in her business practices and in her interpreting process. I have known her to be a most effective and accurate interpreter, as well as a supportive and encouraging team interpreter."

Regarding Ms. Smallwood's business ethics:

"I am writing this to encourage you to award this year's MLB Award to Ms. Frances Smallwood. Her unflagging commitment to the provision of qualified and certified interpreters for all Deaf individuals in any type of setting in her business practices in and of itself is commendable, but it is her never ending quest to promote the field of signed language interpreting, thus ensuring future qualified and certified interpreters for Deaf individuals, that sets her apart from the rest."

Regarding Ms. Smallwood's commitment to supporting future interpreters:

"Frances has been a mentor to many up and coming interpreters in our area. I can say that I am one of them. When I struggled to pass the RID written test she was willing to mentor me which contributed to my successful completion of the test the second time around. Frances is always willing to give feedback when teaming which proves to be vital. I can remember the first time she provided me with feedback and I felt so insulted. When I finally realized that she was trying to build me up I found it VERY beneficial to accept and even ask for her feedback through present time. She has offered this type of professionalism, mentoring and friendship to any interpreter who has moved into our area or has simply asked for it. Through her business she finds opportunities for new interpreters to gain hands on experience in safe environments."

"I have seen Frances time and time again offer mentorship and training to newly graduated interpreters, newly relocated interpreters, and newly interested community individuals. Her devotion to the profession is apparent to me in every gesture that she offers to these individuals."