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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 6, 2010

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## Department on Aging Announces Senior Hall of Fame Inductees, Presents Governor's Unique Achievement Awards

### *Seniors awarded for their community service*

**SPRINGFIELD** – Illinois Department on Aging Director Charles D. Johnson today presented the 2010 *Senior Hall of Fame* and *Governor's Unique Achievement Awards* on behalf of Governor Pat Quinn during a ceremony held at the Executive Mansion. The Illinois Department on Aging holds the ceremony each year, with the support of Walgreens, to recognize the special contributions these seniors do to help improve communities.

The Illinois Senior Hall of Fame was initiative by the General Assembly in 1994 to honor Illinoisans age 65 and older who excel in four categories: Community Service, Education, Performance and/or Graphic Arts and the Labor Force. Since then, 79 people have been inducted into the Hall of Fame, including this year's awardees.

"Today's inductees represent various areas of the state. Each has been selected through a statewide nomination and selection process," said Director Johnson. "We salute them for their commitment to excellence and we are honored to induct them into the 2010 Senior Hall of Fame."

Also announced were the *Governor's Unique Achievement Awards*, nominated by Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state, honoring groups, individuals and programs that make a positive impact on the lives of seniors in the state.

The 2010 inductees into the Illinois *Senior Hall of Fame* are:

**Nancy Germann, 75, of Mt. Vernon is the winner of the Education category.** Germann began her teaching career, in 1960, after graduating from Mt. Vernon Community College. As a single parent working full-time, she took night and summer courses at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale to complete her bachelor's degree. Germann taught third grade at Belle Rive Grade School until she retired in 1993. After 33 years in the classroom, she returned as a substitute teacher, music teacher and currently works as a special education aide. She is active with retired teachers' programs, is vice president of Club 53 at Fifth Third Bank, serves on the board of directors at Comprehensive Services and has served on the music committee for Cedarhurst Chamber Music. She plays the oboe in community bands, sings in a choir and plays piano at nursing homes and for church services. Germann's community service includes participation in the annual Easter pageant and work with a soup kitchen.

**Patricia DiFiore, 70, of Zion is the winner of the Labor category.** DiFiore has more than 28 years experience in developing and managing senior housing facilities. She works on each project, from the concept stage to physical completion, to ensure a high-quality lifestyle for seniors so they may remain independent. She also works with youth developing numerous programs for troubled teens, and was one of the first single mothers in the state become a licensed foster parent. DiFiore has worked as a social worker. She and her husband, a clinical psychologist, helped to develop chemical abuse programs to assist people dependent on alcohol and drugs.

After moving to Chicago, she became involved with housing through the Council for Jewish Elderly, which led to her passion for supportive living. DiFiore is credited with the creation, building and opening of a pilot supportive living facility for the State of Illinois, in 2001, called Rush Barton of Chicago, which has grown to 118 facilities across the state.

**John “Jack” Muldoon, 77, of Arlington Heights is the winner of the Community Service category.** Muldoon is a true “community servant.” Muldoon first honed his community skills in politics and volunteer service after moving to Hoffman Estates in 1959. After an executive career that took him all over the country, he returned to the Chicago area and settled in Arlington Heights. Muldoon, who lost both his parents while he was in high school, was raised by an aunt and uncle. He built on his unfortunate experience by always sustaining a positive outlook. After serving in the Army, then getting an accounting degree, he attended Harvard Business School and was selected to attend the Army War College. Since retiring in 1996, he has served on committees and councils and created educational programs on investment strategies. Muldoon is an active volunteer at the Arlington Heights Senior Center, the Arlington Heights Library and Wheeling Township.

**(Posthumous inductee) Robert Berns, 79, of Morton Grove is the winner of the Performance & Graphic Arts Category.** Berns graduated from the Ray Vogue School of Commercial Art and worked as an advertising manager and art director for several sporting goods companies including Brunswick Corporation, Wilson Sporting Goods, MacGregor Sporting Goods, PGA Golf, Ram Golf and Northwestern Golf. His revolutionary golf equipment designs won numerous national awards. In 1969, he started his own advertising agency and continued to specialize in sporting goods before branching out into other industries. Berns won so many awards for his woodcarving designs and techniques that he wrote an instructional book about it, entitled *Patterns for Woodcarving*. Berns was a winner for awards from the Graphic Arts Council of Chicago, the recipient of a national offset-lithography award and was cited for outstanding achievement in advertising by the Chicago Federated Advertising Club, among other accolades.

The following are the *Governor’s Unique Achievement Award winners* (nominated by Area Agencies on Aging.)

**Kendall Area Transit (KAT), nominated by the Northeastern Illinois Agency on Aging.** Earlier this year, KAT officially kicked off service as the first-ever, county-wide public transit provider for Kendall County. KAT provides services that are especially vital to seniors and persons with disabilities. KAT, administered through the county with daily operations provided by the Voluntary Action Center, posted a double-digit increase in monthly ridership. *Instrumental in KAT were Kendall County board member Jessie Haffenrichter; Kendall County administrator Jeff Wilkins; Senior Services Associates’ executive director Betty Schoenholtz; Kendall County advocate Goldie Tarr; Voluntary Action executive director Tom Zucker, and KAT program director Paul LaLonde.*

**Allen Ottens, Ph.D., Retired Professor of Counseling at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, nominated by Northern Illinois Area Agency on Aging.** Before the start of the National Family Caregiver Support Program, in 2000, Dr. Ottens saw the need to support family caregivers who often neglected themselves. In 1993, he started a caregiver support group in Rockford that was both supportive and educational. Since then, Dr. Ottens has served hundreds of caregivers, many of whom report appreciation for his guidance and listening ear.

**Wanda Aberle, nominated by Central Illinois Agency on Aging.** Aberle, from Peoria, has been a community leader and advocate for more than 20 years. She is passionate about nursing and public health. She has worked as a clinical instructor and was instrumental in expanding case management to include a focus on health promotion and prevention. Aberle’s more noteworthy projects identified chronically-ill seniors who were repeatedly hospitalized to foster more continuous health assessments, and a study to help control diabetes and congestive health failure.

**Senior Resource Center at Family Service, nominated by East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging.** At the center, older adults with chronic diseases and disabilities receive help to take charge of their health. Since 2006, master trainers at the center have disseminated evidence-based healthy aging programs including coordinating workshops such as *Take Charge of Your Health: Live Well, Be Well* that have helped nearly 300 participants.

**Connie Heinle and Patricia Prewitt, both nominated by Egyptian Area Agency on Aging.** Both women have dedicated their lives to the service of seniors. Heinle, from Marion, taught high school before working for Blue Cross-Blue Shield. Before retiring in 2006, she was responsible for Medicare presentations in 41 counties at senior centers, health fairs and state fairs. Prewitt, from Vienna, retired last year from Medicare Part B work after 25 years. Together, they are quite formidable in their knowledge. Recently, Heinle and Prewitt began volunteering for the Senior Medicare Patrol to empower seniors to prevent and detect health care fraud.

**Leroy Gruber, 90, of O'Fallon, nominated by the Area Agency on Aging of Southwestern Illinois.** Gruber, a long time Lions Club member, saw that many older adults were neglecting their eye care because their insurance would not pay. So, Gruber brought together the local Lions clubs, Lenscrafters, the University of Missouri-School of Optometry and the Area Agency on Aging to screen older adults and provide them with glasses when needed. Gruber continues to work with the Greater East St. Louis Health and Social Services Consortium.

**Ray Wiedle, nominated by the Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland.** Wiedle, who is originally from Chatham, was instrumental in forming the land of *Lincoln Honor Flight* and serves as chairman. *Honor Flight* flies veterans of World War II to Washington, D.C., to view the World War II Memorial. Wiedle makes presentations about the program and works to secure donations. To date more than 300 World War II veterans have received the trip free of charge in honor of their service. Wiedle's goal is to get as many veterans as possible on these flights to see their memorial.

**Rush Older Adult Programs, nominated by AgeOptions, Suburban Chicago.** The Older Adult Program at Rush University Medical Center operates under the leadership of Robyn Golden. Golden is a national leader on transitional programming for older persons who return home after a hospital stay. She and her staff work to bridge medical and social services to better improve the lives of older adults in the Chicagoland area. Through the program, local issues and programs are brought to the attention of national policy and program leaders.

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