

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

James P. Gleeson, Ph.D.

Dr. James Gleeson is an Associate Professor at the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Gleeson's research and publications focus on kinship care policy and practice, child welfare training, how child welfare workers learn, and evaluation of child welfare programs and practice.

Dr. Gleeson has been principal investigator for a number of federally and state funded child welfare research, curriculum development, and training projects. He is the co-editor (with Dr. Creasie Finney Hairston) of *Kinship Care: Improving Practice Through Research*, published by the Child Welfare League of America, and is co-author (with Faith Johnson Bonecutter) of *Achieving Permanency for Children in Kinship Foster Care: Training Manual and Videotapes*, which is a product of a U.S. Children's Bureau grant.

Dr. Gleeson is a member of the review board for the *Child Welfare* journal and the editorial board for the *Journal of Public Child Welfare*. He served on the Child Welfare League of America's National Kinship Care Advisory Committee and the League's National Advisory Committee on Research to Practice.

Sharon McDaniel, MPA, Ed.D.

Dr. Sharon McDaniel is the Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer of A Second Chance, Inc., a nonprofit corporation whose mission is to provide a safe, secure, and nurturing environment to children who are being cared for by their relatives or a close family friend.

Dr. McDaniel serves as a trustee of Casey Family Programs and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative. She also serves on the Board of Advisors of Casey Family Services and is a long-time board member of the Black Administrators in Child Welfare. Dr. McDaniel serves on the Pennsylvania Quality Assurance Committee and is a member of the Allegheny County Children's Cabinet. She previously served as a caseworker, supervisor, and court liaison for Allegheny County Children Youth and Family Services, as well as a caseworker and program director for the Black Adoption Services Program of the Three Rivers Adoption Council. Dr. McDaniel also served as Co-Chair of the Statewide Task Force on Kinship Care and was a Co-Facilitator for the Allegheny County Foster Care and Kinship Initiative. She was a panel member for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Advisory Kinship Panel.

Dr. McDaniel earned a bachelor's degree in administration of justice from Pennsylvania State University, a master of public administration from the University of Pittsburgh, and a doctorate of education from NOVA Southeastern University. She also holds a certificate in nonprofit management from the Heinz School for Public Policy at Carnegie-Mellon University.

Pat Owens

Pat Owens is Co-Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer of GrandFamilies of America, the only national organization whose membership and administrative staff is comprised entirely of relatives caring 24/7 for their relative children. GrandFamilies of America provides support, education, and personal one-on-one case planning for relative caregivers, free of charge.

Ms. Owens is a widow and the mother of seven children, four of whom are adopted, including her grandson, Michael, who has been the inspiration for her advocacy efforts since 2000. She and her

husband were foster parents for ten years. Ms. Owens previously served in administration for the Frederick County Board of Education for 24 years, and as Customer Service Director for TransIT, a local transportation system. She served on the board of directors for the Department of Social Services in Frederick, Maryland, and as its legislative chair. Ms. Owens also served for several years as chair of the Maryland Association of Social Service Boards (MASSB) and on the Frederick County Department of Aging. She recently was appointed by Governor O'Malley to the Maryland Commission for Women.

The author of *Where is Michael's Brother?*, Ms. Owens has been awarded the Champion of Children Award for the State of Maryland, Department of Human Resources of Maryland 2007 Advocate Award, and the 2007 Generations United Grandparent Advocate Award, sponsored by AARP, among others.

Mary Bissell, J.D.

Mary Bissell is an attorney, child and family policy expert and founding partner of ChildFocus, a consulting firm that helps nonprofit organizations, foundations, and government agencies support America's children and families. She also is an adjunct professor at the Georgetown University Law Center, where she teaches a class on advocacy for public interest lawyers.

Prior to establishing ChildFocus, Ms. Bissell was a Fellow at the New America Foundation and served as a senior staff attorney and lobbyist at the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), where she focused on poverty, child welfare, substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health policy issues. Previously, she was a Heinz Fellow and later a legislative assistant to Sen. John D. Rockefeller (D-WV), where she worked on family, judiciary, and banking issues. Ms. Bissell began her career as the Equal Justice Works/Crowell & Moring Fellow at the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, starting the nation's first legal services program exclusively for grandparents and other relative caregivers. While at Legal Aid, Ms. Bissell founded and directed the D.C. Kinship Care Coalition, a grassroots advocacy organization. She has published extensively in a broad range of publications, including *The Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Miami Herald*, and *Philadelphia Inquirer*. She has been featured on CNN, the TODAY Show, NBC, and National Public Radio.

Ms. Bissell is a graduate of Yale College and the Georgetown University Law Center and is a member of the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, and Supreme Court Bars.

Becky Shipp

Becky Shipp has been a Health Policy Advisor for the Senate Finance Committee since 2003. She serves under current Ranking Member Orrin G. Hatch (R-UT) and previously served under former Chair and Ranking Member Charles E. Grassley (R-IA).

During her tenure, Ms. Shipp's areas of responsibility have included the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), disability policy, including nursing home standards and quality, and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and related programs. Her current areas of responsibility also include Title V of the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant program, mental health parity, child welfare, foster care, and adoption assistance programs.

Ms. Shipp is the principal staffer for the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, founded by Sen. Grassley and co-chaired by Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA). The Caucus focuses on older youth in and out of foster care.