



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
BOARD ON AGING AND LONG TERM CARE

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STATE OMBUDSMAN  
DESIGNEE

Kim Marheine

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April 20, 2022

The Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care (BOALTC) notes the unexpected passing on April 14, 2022, of Heather A. Bruemmer, Executive Director and State Long Term Care Ombudsman.

A leader within the Board for more than 22 years, and most recently as executive director since December 2007, Heather will long be remembered for her collaborative spirit, her advocacy on behalf of some of the state's most vulnerable citizens, and the care and grace she brought to every conversation. Every person Heather spoke with always had her complete attention, and she cared about every small detail of the lives of her staff and colleagues. As executive director, Heather led the Medigap Helpline Program, the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, and the Volunteer Ombudsman Program. Her presence and constant kindness will be greatly missed by her staff and volunteers.

Heather's accomplishments are extensive and include leadership within state government and workgroups representing the interests of older adult consumers of services. She will also be remembered for her many contributions at the national level to the advocacy interests impacting consumer rights and quality of life concerns.

At the time of her passing, Heather was the chair of the Long Term Care Advisory Council, a founding member of the Wisconsin Coalition for Collaborative Excellence in Assisted Living (WCCEAL), and a member of the national Center for Excellence in Assisted Living (CEAL). She served on former Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel's Task Force on Elder Abuse and was a current member of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Dementia Steering Committee. Heather's exemplary service also extended to the Civil Money Penalty State Review Committee, and the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN).

A mentor to numerous other state ombudsmen across the nation, Heather was an active member of the National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs, having served in several leadership roles. Heather was honored in 2018 with the Consumer Voice's Cernoria Johnson Memorial Advocacy Award, presented to persons whose work has had national impact, or who is a model for national excellence.

Heather talked often about how proud she was to work in service to this state's older adult consumers. The integrity and respectful manner that Heather brought to even the most challenging of conversations led everyone else at the table to follow her with civility and a greater focus on the people served by this agency and its partners.

In her last days, Heather asked that we continue to move forward, to not mourn for long, and to remember how many people need us. While all who knew Heather will mourn her untimely passing, they will honor her most by continuing the work that she has been so instrumental in fashioning, and by celebrating all of the good that comes out of true public service.

Heather's obituary can be [found here](#), along with information on the visitation and funeral service.

The Executive Committee of the Board voted on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to implement BOALTC's succession policy and to appoint Attorney Jessica L. Trudell, Counsel to the Board as Acting Executive Director. Kim Marheine, Ombudsman Services Supervisor will serve as the State Ombudsman Designee.