

## **Deborah J. Weatherston Leadership in Infant Mental Health Award**

The Deborah J. Weatherston Leadership in Infant Mental Health Award is dedicated to the founding Executive Director of the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health. Dr. Weatherston is known for her eloquent writing about the practice of infant mental health and reflective supervision. She has trained and supported dozens of professionals who have gone on to become leaders in the IECMH field. Dr. Weatherston was intimately involved in the creation of the MI-AIMH copyrighted *Competency Guidelines* and Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. Her work in leading the implementation of these workforce development initiatives has led to staggering changes across the US and the world. Thanks to her commitment, the recognition of the need for a competent and well-supported infant-family workforce grows steadily.

This award is presented annually at the Weatherston Summit for Alliance Leaders, sponsored by the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health. In keeping with Dr. Weatherston's unmatched abilities to promote IECMH-informed workforce development, the award is intended to recognize others who have similarly enhanced this field through the practice and understanding of cultural humility in IECMH-informed professional development. These leaders have years of experience with advocacy, training, mentoring, supervising, leading programs/systems, or in some other significant way, supporting a diverse and well-prepared IECMH-informed workforce. Finally, they inspire others to promote and provide workforce development opportunities that are informed by the [\*Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work with Infants, Children, and Families\*](#) and by other core IECMH principles and practices.

VAIMH is honored to announce that the 2024 Deborah J. Weatherston Leadership in Infant Mental Health Award will be presented to Judith Martens on October 16, 2024. Judith is a licensed clinical social worker with over 25 years of experience working as a parent-child psychotherapist and reflective supervisor in early childhood mental health programs in New York and Florida before moving to Virginia where she was the director of training and professional development for family and center-based child care providers for eleven years. While in Florida, Judith spent 8 years working with Head Start programs in developing a comprehensive model for mental health services. Currently, she is self-employed as a reflective supervision facilitator, consultant, and trainer. She is an Endorsed Infant Mental Health Mentor-Clinical (IMHM-C) and has participated in the Reflective Supervision Symposia sponsored by the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health for the past four years. Judy is trained in using the RIOS, and has presented at both NAEYC and ZERO TO THREE National Training Institutes.

Judy's importance to Virginia and VAIMH can not be overstated. In 2010, she was one of the seventeen founding members of the Virginia Association for Infant Mental Health. Through her wisdom and experience, Judy became VAIMH's first Vice President in 2011, and went on to become President in 2012. She was instrumental in organizing VAIMH's first Annual Conference, a policy summit that hosted experts in the field of IECMH, such as Deborah Weatherston, Rob Corso, and Doug Davies.

Judy went on to become part of Virginia's first Infant Mental Health Endorsement Cohort and was one of nine practitioners to become Endorsed in 2013. In 2014, Judy began offering group reflective supervision to IMH applicants in the Northern region and continues to contract with VAIMH to offer reflective supervision to new IECMH Endorsement applicants from across the state to this day. In 2016, Judy was instrumental in creating and offering VAIMH's first Infant Mental Health 4-Part Training Series for Mental Health Specialists and Mental Health Mentors, and two years later, she began offering what was affectionately called "The Saturday Sessions", the IMH Training and RS Learning Collaborative, ***Broadening the Lens***.

It would not be surprising if every infant and early childhood mental health applicant in Virginia has either received RSC from Judy, or crossed paths with her. Her deep passion for this work is evident to all who know her and she has been the source of motivation and inspiration for many.