

2022 Spirit of TAM Award

Danette Ross Watson

In recognition of its 35th year in 2021, the TAM Board created the Spirit of TAM Award to honor TAM members whose professional lives embody many, if not all, of TAM's Strategic Goals: promoting and encouraging the use of mediation, promoting cooperation and communication among organizations and individuals that affect alternative dispute resolution, sponsoring and promoting professional development for mediators and other professional dispute resolution specialists, and fiscally sustaining and growing the organization. Laury Adams was the first recipient of the award in recognition of her loyalty, generosity, guidance, professionalism, passion, and overall graciousness throughout her 35 years of outstanding service to TAM.

This year's Spirit of TAM Award went to someone who is a relative newcomer to TAM. Although she has practiced in the field of ADR for over 25 years, she only recently moved to Texas and brought her tremendous energy and enthusiasm for ADR with her. She joined TAM in 2017, and by 2019 had become a member of the TAM Board of Directors. In 2020 she took over the position of TAM Outreach Chair, contacting executive directors of all the dispute resolution centers in the State and asking them what TAM could do to help them. From her work in Outreach grew her idea of monthly TAM Talks, which began in April 2020.

Somewhere during these years of service to TAM, she managed to find the time to found the West Texas Community Mediation Center (WTXCMC) in Big Spring, Texas, bringing alternative dispute resolution to many areas of her community. The WTXCMC offers classes in anger/conflict management and family/domestic violence. It provides mediation for in-school conflicts, attendance/truancy, family conflicts, and community disputes. It also offers the YES Program: Youth Empowerment Sessions, mentoring, life skills, and civic responsibility facilitation. There is also a new Family Friend program to support parents involved in the CPS process.

The 2022 Spirit of TAM Award was presented to Danette Ross Watson for outstanding and innovative service to TAM and to her community. Danette embodies the spirit of TAM through her creativity, insightfulness, professionalism, commitment, and enthusiasm. Recently installed as President of TAM, Danette is also a TMCA Credentialed Distinguished Mediator, Certified Mediator/Assessor for the Maryland Council for Dispute Resolution, and served as NAACP President for the Berkeley County Branch, West Virginia, from 2010 to 2013.

