

THE REV. LOUIS J. PUTZ, C.S.C., AWARD

Presented by the University of Notre Dame Alumni Association and the Notre Dame Senior Alumni

AUGUST 31, 2023



Russell Lovell '66

For his outstanding dedication to advancing civil rights and his commitment to providing experiential learning to the next generation of lawyers, the Notre Dame Alumni Association and Notre Dame Senior Alumni honor **Russell Lovell '66**.

Growing up in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Lovell witnessed racial segregation and discrimination in his local neighborhood and public school system. This early experience planted the seeds for him to develop a passion and commitment to create more equitable communities in society. While a student at Notre Dame, Lovell was struck by University president Rev. Theodore Hesburgh's transformative role in multiple American civic and government initiatives. Despite earning his bachelors in accounting, Lovell was inspired by Hesburgh to pursue a law degree at the University of Nebraska—returning to his home state upon graduation.

During Lovell's time at Nebraska College of Law, his high marks quickly earned him an externship with the Nebraska Governor's Crime Commission, where his work on legislative reform and constitutional issues sparked his interest in public service. Though Nebraska Law lacked formal classes in civil rights, Lovell gravitated towards educating himself on civil rights and racial segregation in the South. The assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 deepened Lovell's conviction that he would pursue civil rights work after graduation.

Lovell accepted a judicial law clerk position with Judge Floyd Gibson of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit in Kansas City. He played a key role in the 1972 *Morissey vs. Brewer* case, setting a 50-year precedent of assuring the right to a fair hearing for hundreds of thousands of parolees nationwide. After completing the clerkship, Lovell, his wife, Linda, and their two daughters, moved to Indianapolis where he served as staff attorney, then director of litigation for the Indianapolis Legal Services Organization, and law director for the Indiana Center on Law and Poverty—where he was lead counsel on the NAACP class action case that integrated the Indiana State Police Department.

In 1976, Lovell landed his dream role of law professor at Drake University. During his 38-year tenure at Drake, Lovell served as associate dean and was honored as Drake's 2014 Most Outstanding Professor for Experiential Education for his creation of a program—now in its 27th year—in which all first-year law students observe a real jury trial. Lovell also mentored more than 80 public service scholars through the creation of his public service scholarship program, which he directed until his retirement in 2014.

In retirement, Lovell continues his pro-bono work with the NAACP and the Iowa Supreme Court, advocating for positive change and remaining a force for good in society.

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The Reverend Louis J. Putz, C.S.C., was the inspiration and spiritual founder of the Notre Dame Senior Alumni (NDSA). In his memory, the Rev. Louis J. Putz, C.S.C., Award is presented annually by the Notre Dame Alumni Association to an individual (alumnus or non-alumnus) in recognition of the development and implementation of social action programs that have contributed to improving the lives of others. The recipients are chosen by the NDSA Board of Directors.

PAST RECIPIENTS OF THIS AWARD:

2022—Dr. Patricia Curtin White '80
2021—Elizabeth Woodward '58 SMC
2019—Joe Adler '52 and Jodie Adler
2018—Gail Thomas McKenna '71 M.A.
2017—James E. Coolahan, Jr. '71
2016—Jim Kinnane '57
2015—Dick E. Jacob '56
2014—John C. Dwyer '55
2012—James J. Cavnar '67
2011—Neil Hitz '62 and Mr. Christopher Walsh '59
2010—James W. O'Neill '57
2009—Arthur C. Frericks '50
2008—Paul Hurley '56
2007—George Oser '58
2006—Noreen Keating
2005—Elizabeth '59 S.M.C. and Dr. James R. Kennedy '57
2004—Mary Lou '56 S.M.C. and Richard Yeager '56
2003—Dr. William J. Walsh '58
2002—Joseph P. Delaney