

Carlene Walz

Class of 1970

Carlene Walz returned to JCC in 1968 after interrupting her college career in 1955 to begin her family of four children. After receiving her BA from Michigan State University in 1970, she was accepted into the first day class at Cooley Law School as one of ten women students in a class of 150. While only 90 from that first class graduated, all ten women who began the program successfully graduated.



Carlene began her law career at the Legal Services office in Jackson. While raising her family of four during these years, she is thankful to her family for their support and for tolerating their busy mother at a time when many women were opting to stay home to raise their families. Her family's support was especially meaningful for her when in 1990 she ran for and won the open seat in the District Court. Carlene served on the bench for 12 years, then retired in 2001. She currently works part time for the City of Jackson in the Administrative Hearings Bureau.

Carlene learned early in life the importance of supporting the community where she lives and works. Her passion has been to make a difference for women and her colleagues through her community work, including the United Way board, the Jackson Speech and Hearing Clinic, Irish Hills Girl Scouts, Legal Services, and the women's AWARE Shelter, where she was a founding mother. In addition to being an active member with the Business and Professional Women's organization, Carlene is a trustee on the Jackson County Community Foundation Board.

Carlene received the Susan B. Anthony Award honoring women volunteers in 1988 and the Athena Award in 1991. For Carlene, Philanthropy truly begins at home with service.

"If you gain your livelihood and your rewards from the community, you must try to make it a better place by giving back. Philanthropy is not just money, but time and energy as well."