

**WALTER BERGMAN HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD  
AFT MICHIGAN SECRETARY TREASURER LOIS J. LOFTON-DONIVER**

**WHEREAS:** Lois J. Lofton-Doniver is the first African-American to serve as the elected Secretary-Treasurer of AFT Michigan, elected in 2001 and serving until her retirement in 2014; and

**WHEREAS:** Lois is one of eleven children and was born on the lower eastside of Detroit, Michigan. She attended Detroit Public Schools and earned a Bachelor's of Science in Educable Mentally Impairment (EMI) and a Masters plus ten hours in Education Sociology from Wayne State University; and

**WHEREAS:** Lois was employed as an EMI teacher for eleven years and a Learning Disability Consultant for twelve years with Detroit Public Schools (DPS). She was appointed in 1998 as the Assistant to the President (Rollie Hopgood) of the State Federation for education issues and professional development. AFT Michigan, under her leadership, has notable professional development and community outreach programs recognized at the local, state and national level. Lois is also the author and chair of the "Rollie Hopgood Future Teacher Scholarship"; and

**WHEREAS:** Lois witnessed the unjust treatment her sister with special needs received when she was removed from the family home; and the suffering of her parents being forced to sign away their parental rights to the State of Michigan in order to assure their five year old daughter would receive necessary medical treatment and physical therapy; and

**WHEREAS:** From that experience Lois started her journey advocating for equality for special education in a general education domain. As a fourth year teacher she organized a parent group and started a writing campaign to stop the segregation of special education students being housed in portable units on the playground of Guest K-8 School. The campaign ended with DPS moving special education classrooms into the main building and Lois being transferred. The campaign also attracted the attention of Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) Executive Vice President, Carol Thomas and Administrative Assistant, Ted Madison. They encouraged Lois to become an activist working through the union for special education and political action in order to achieve positive legislation to support the federal Individual Disability Education Act (IDEA); and

**WHEREAS:** At the DFT, Lois chaired the first two-day district wide union sponsored Professional Development Conference offering fifty workshops. She served her union as Vice-President, Election Committee Acting Chair, Committee On Political Education (COPE) Chair, negotiating team member, executive secretary for the Labor, DPS and Wayne State University Teacher Center, and Political Action (PAC) Fund Raising chair before moving over to AFT Michigan; and

**WHEREAS:** Lois has been a Democratic Precinct Delegate for twenty-eight years; she also served as corresponding secretary for the Fourteenth Congressional District, voting poll coordinator for literature distribution on Election Day and a driver getting senior citizens to the polls; and

**WHEREAS:** Lois is famous in her community for her annual “Halloween Politics and Treats.” Every year she distributes political literature on current issues and candidates, encourages adults to vote, and gives appetizing treats to all who visits her home for Halloween; and

**WHEREAS:** Lois is a tireless worker for those individuals who are victims of social injustice and economic disadvantage. She makes it her mission when traveling outside of Michigan to provide a meal to a street person daily in whatever city she is visiting. Lois also volunteers to help homeless women return to the workforce by role playing and instructing the ladies about proper attire for a job interview and even providing new clothing when necessary for the interviews. She conducts an annual new coat collection for children and adults, works at several churches’ soup kitchens serving hot meals, provides workshops for being an effective parent, and tutors young adults in preparation for taking the GED assessment and other academic subjects; and

**WHEREAS:** Lois Lofton-Doniver is a dedicated activist for the labor movement and human and civil rights causes, and in addition to her own union, has worked with other organizations such as the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Coalition of Labor Union Women, A. Philip Randolph Institute, Michigan Coalition for Human Rights, American Association of University Women, United Auto Workers Women Education Committee, Michigan Parent and Teacher Association, and the Michigan League for Human Services; and  
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

**RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan congratulates Lois on her retirement, thanks her for her decades of service to others, and rightfully honors her as the 2014 recipient of the Walter Bergman Human Rights Award.

Submitted by:

Human Rights Committee (May 12, 2014)