

Imagination Library of Grant County, Inc. Board and Staff Roster – Fall 2020



Barbara Taylor, Ed.D., President (2021)

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Professor and Dean Emeritus, College of Education,  
WNMU

Barbara Taylor, Professor and Dean Emeritus of the School of Education at Western New Mexico University has supported the education of all children throughout her career. The Imagination Library that provides books to children from birth to age five is but one avenue to nurture and advance this goal. She has been an active board member working to promote literacy in the community where she began as a literacy volunteer when she first moved to New Mexico. “Books open doors to adventure, imagination and ideas. Reading is the foundation of learning and nothing is more exciting than to see the face of a child light up when they realize they can read.”



Rose Marie Placencia, Vice President (2021)

575.538.5908

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Retired Educator

Rosie is a retired educator after teaching for 32 years at Harrison Schmitt Elementary in Silver City, NM. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree and her Master’s degree in Education from Western New Mexico University. She has three grown children and is also blessed with four grandchildren, three of which live in the same town. Needless to say, she is provided with a “grandma fix” on a daily basis! Her time is spent with those children, continuing her “teacher” modeling and expectations. She is true to the saying, “once a teacher, always a teacher!”

She is a member of several sororities, all of which promote education for children and their well-being, as well as inspire young women to follow their dreams and make a difference in their lives and the lives of others. She is a member of P.E.O., Alpha Delta Kappa, and is President of Belles for Education. Rosie is also Treasurer of Theatre Group New Mexico whose mission is to provide quality theater experience to community members of all ages, especially youth. Since Rosie has always been an avid reader, she jumped at the chance to become involved with the Imagination Library board as Vice President. She loves children and will cross any bridge to get a book in their hands! She feels books are like gold- “the more you have, and the more you read, the RICHER you are!”



Candace Anderson-Amaro, Secretary (2022)

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Dental hygienist and mother of 2

Candace Anderson-Amaro joined our board of directors in 2018. As a mom, she believes “reading is pivotal in a child’s development,” and she hopes to use her energy and enthusiasm to educate others.



Rosemary Smith, Treasurer (2021)

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Correspondence for Mark Richard, Architect; formerly church treasurer

Rosemary said she was honored when asked to consider being a part of the board of Imagination Library of Grant County by founders Loren and Barbara Nelson. She has been treasurer since joining the board in 2018 and has enjoyed working with the other directors who share similar interests in and enthusiasm for this program. There is much to be said for being associated with an organization that helps impact young children’s lives for the good. The Nelsons, both educators, were obviously drawn to Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library because it is a philanthropic program that engages young children and their parents, and they wanted to implement a program like this in our community and to expand the benefits for literacy through our whole state. With a new book coming each month, parents are encouraged to make reading to their young children a regular and fun family activity. Free age-appropriate books are mailed monthly to local children enrolled in the program from birth to age 5. These young children will have accumulated a substantial library of their own by the time they arrive at kindergarten, where they are certainly at an advantage to become ready readers!



Judi Bush, Director (2021)

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Educator

Judi Bush became a member of our board in May 2018. As a kindergarten teacher, Judi knows firsthand the power of reading aloud and having books in the home. Judi joined the board to promote early literacy in Grant County. “We wish for all children to know the joy of reading and have books at their fingertips.”



Catherine McMillan, Director (2022)

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Retired Educator and Community  
Activist

Catherine McMillan was born and educated in South Dakota but has lived most of her life in Silver City. Her biggest accomplishment was raising six children into educated and responsible adults. She’s been president of the local Community Concert Association and held various offices for 24 Club and Belles for Education service organizations. She is a member and volunteer of New Mexico Native Plant Society. Catherine worked as a Representative for Horace Mann Investors selling insurance and securities and as an educator. As a teacher, she taught at WNMU Community College and at Silver High School teaching English and was the librarian. Since retiring she designed and built her LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficient Design) home. She is an avid gardener and traveler. She volunteers for Imagination Library.



Colleen Walker, Ph.D., Director (2021)

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Literacy Coach, Cobre  
School District

Colleen Walker has over 30 years of teaching experience at the Elementary and University levels. Colleen earned a Ph. D. in Literacy Education from Ohio State University. She has worked at universities in several states including Texas, North Carolina, and Kentucky before moving to New Mexico. Colleen currently works with Cobre Consolidated School District as a Literacy Coach and has co-written grants to improve literacy education in the district. Her job allows her to have the best of both worlds- working with teachers and children! Colleen has experience serving on various boards. Wherever she has lived Colleen always gets involved with local and state-level literacy organizations. She feels privileged to be serving a second term as a board member for the Imagination Library of Grant County, because she strongly supports their vision to have “All children in Grant County ...arrive at the steps of Kindergarten ready and able to succeed.” Colleen and her husband Steve have lived in Silver City for five years and enjoy the climate, people and vast Gila Wilderness that offers many opportunities for an active, outdoor lifestyle.



Barbara Nelson, Director Emeritus

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[LandBnelson@cybermesa.com](mailto:LandBnelson@cybermesa.com)  
Retired Educator and Founder

Barbara moved to Silver City from Minnesota with her husband in 2002 having recently retired from teaching elementary music in the Minnetonka Public Schools. She volunteered for 10 years at several Grant County El Grito Head Start Schools reading to the children and saw first-hand the need to get books into children’s homes. When Barbara learned about the Imagination Library, a plan came together! She helped establish the Imagination Library of Grant County in 2010, and it has grown rapidly from 8 initial registrants to 1250 children who are currently getting a free, high-quality age-appropriate book each month in the mail. “We know that having books in the homes and having parents reading aloud to their children will foster a love of learning and family bonds will be created.”



Loren Nelson, Director Emeritus

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Retired Educator and Founder

During his 34 year teaching career in Minnesota, Loren taught math to 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders and for 3 years was the software instructor for a staff of 400. For 10 years he was a member of the national board of Hosteling International, now known as American Youth Hostels (AYH) and coordinated the volunteer councils in the Midwest Region covering 7 states. After moving to Silver City, he was one of the founders of the Volunteer Center of Grant County and put his AYH training to work. When Loren's term at AYH was complete, he and Barbara founded the Imagination Library of Grant County in order to provide books to the children of the area. The Dollywood Foundation viewed their success as one of the best in the state and asked them to lead the efforts to make this program available to ALL babies, infants and toddlers in the state. Their efforts continue.



Nancy Stephens, Executive Director

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Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Nancy has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Indiana University and a Master's degree in Social Work from New Mexico State University. She has worked in social service settings in New Mexico and Kentucky. Nancy and her husband Brian moved to Silver City in 2007, and their children loved getting Imagination Library books as babies. Nancy has a passion for children's books and grew up listening to Dolly Parton's music. When she read about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, she jumped at the chance to work for the Grant County affiliate in 2015. Nancy stated in her application, "Although childhood literacy is different from social work, both place value on children's learning, social justice and well-being, and both can facilitate positive change. Almost nothing is more powerful than a good story, especially when it's associated with the love of a parent." Nancy considers story time the best part of each day and plans to read aloud to her kids as long as they let her.