

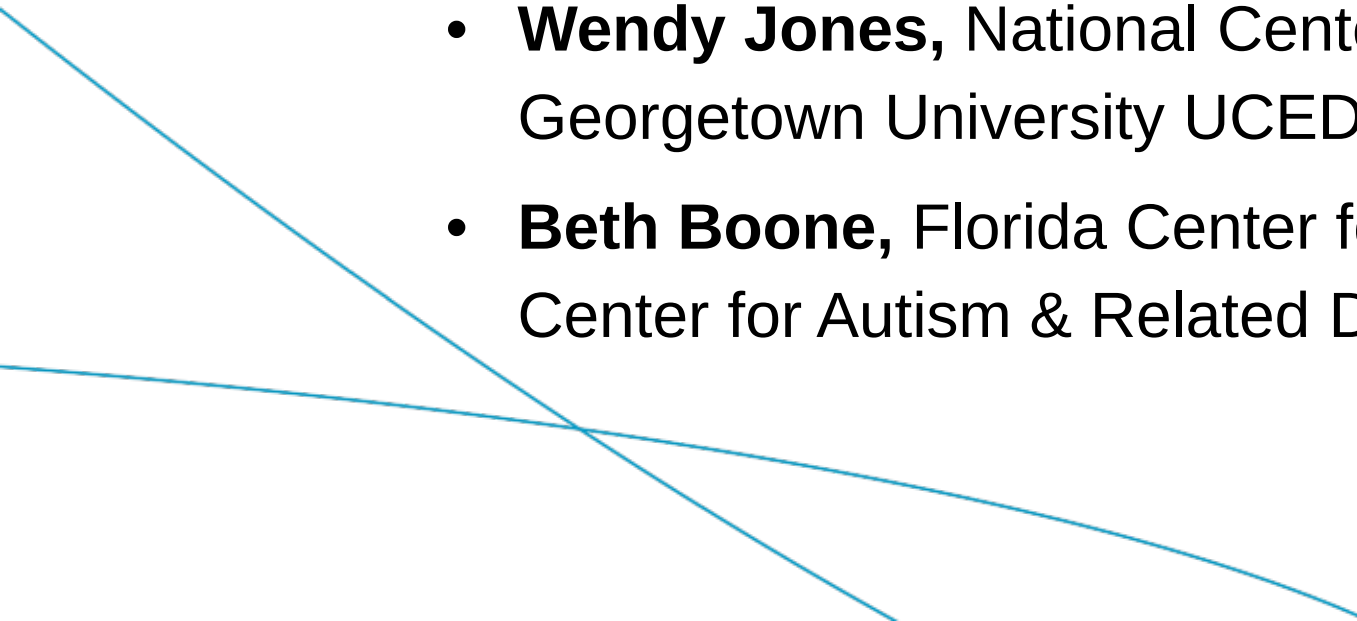
# AUCD Awards Ceremony

November 2025



**AUCD 2025**  
National **Network** Connections

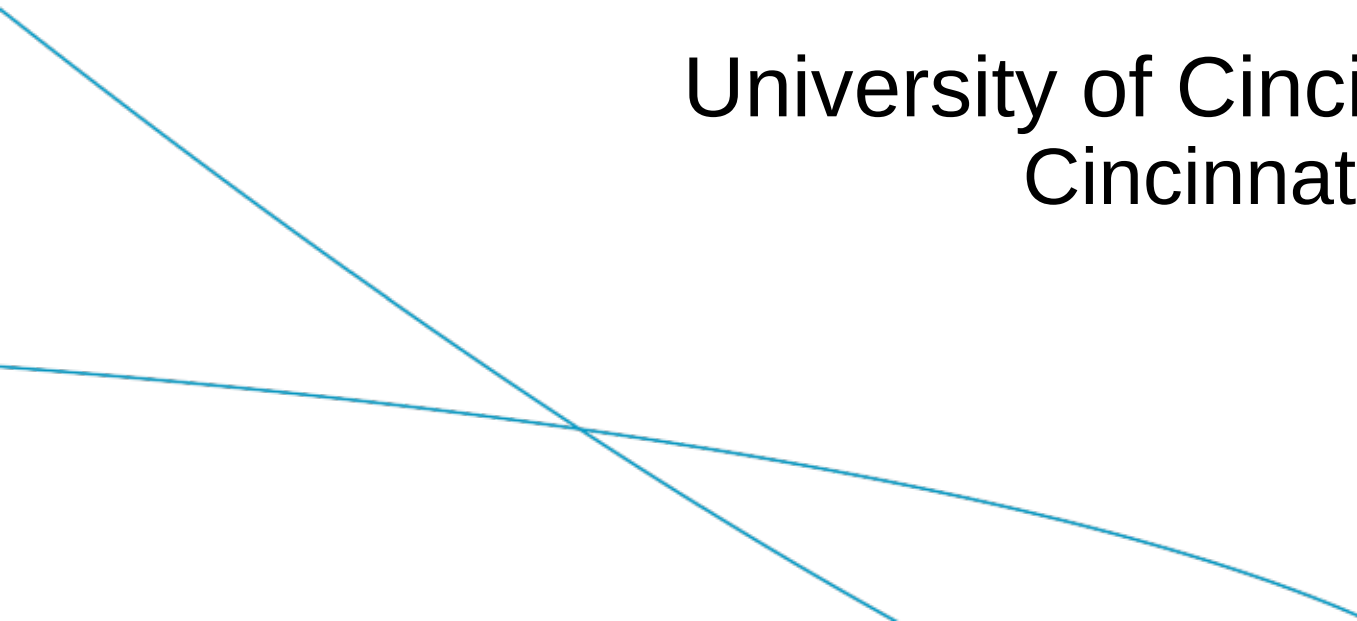
# *Service to the Organization Award*

- **Jenean Castillo**, Westchester Institute for Human Development, New York Medical College UCEDD & LEND
  - **Melanie Davis**, Munroe Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center UCEDD
  - **Wendy Jones**, National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University UCEDD
  - **Beth Boone**, Florida Center for Inclusive Communities and USF Center for Autism & Related Disabilities
- 
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*President's Award*

**I lka Riddle**

University of Cincinnati UCEDD  
Cincinnati, OH

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# *Anne Rudigier Award*

## **Rebecca Townsend**

Kansas University Center  
in Disabilities

*"Rebecca doesn't just talk about inclusion; she lives it. Her research, teaching, and advocacy consistently open doors for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be full partners in the work that affects their lives."*



# *AUCD International Service Award*

## **Mustafa Rfat**

Washington University  
in St. Louis

*“Mustafa Rfat brings a rare combination of lived experience and professional expertise as a person with disabilities and a former refugee. His scholarship, advocacy, and leadership have advanced inclusive communities and ensured that the voices of the most marginalized are heard globally.”*



# *Young Professional Award*

## **Toni Saia**

San Diego State University

*“Dr. Toni Saia bridges lived experience and professional expertise, transforming scholarship, advocacy, and leadership into tangible change for disabled people and the communities that support them.”*



*Gold Star Award*

# Heather Wadyka

United States Senate  
Committee on Appropriations

*“Heather Wadyka consistently rises to meet challenging moments with clarity, determination, and compassion. Her steadfast advocacy ensured that essential DD Act programs remained protected, reflecting her profound commitment to strengthening opportunities for people with disabilities nationwide.”*



## *Gordon Richins Award for Leadership and Advocacy*

# **Joanne Siegel**

Rose F. Kennedy Center

*“Joanne Siegel is the rare leader whose impact cannot be measured solely by programs or policies, but by the generations of self-advocates, families, clinicians, and community members whose lives and futures she has elevated. Her unwavering commitment to equity, dignity, and opportunity for people with developmental disabilities has not only transformed our institution, but has set a national standard for what true advocacy and leadership look like.”*



# *George S. Jesien Distinguished Achievement Award*

## **Cate Weir**

Institute for Community  
Inclusion

*“Cate’s brilliance lies not only in her ideas, but in her ability to bring people together to make those ideas real. She is the heart, the hands, and the mind behind so much of what makes inclusive higher education thrive today.”*



# *Lifetime Achievement Award*

## **Daniel Armstrong**

Mailman Center

*"Dr. Daniel Armstrong's career exemplifies a lifetime of dedication to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families, transforming research, training, clinical care, and policy through visionary leadership, inclusive collaboration, and unwavering advocacy."*



# *Lifetime Achievement Award*

## **Michael Gamel-McCormick**

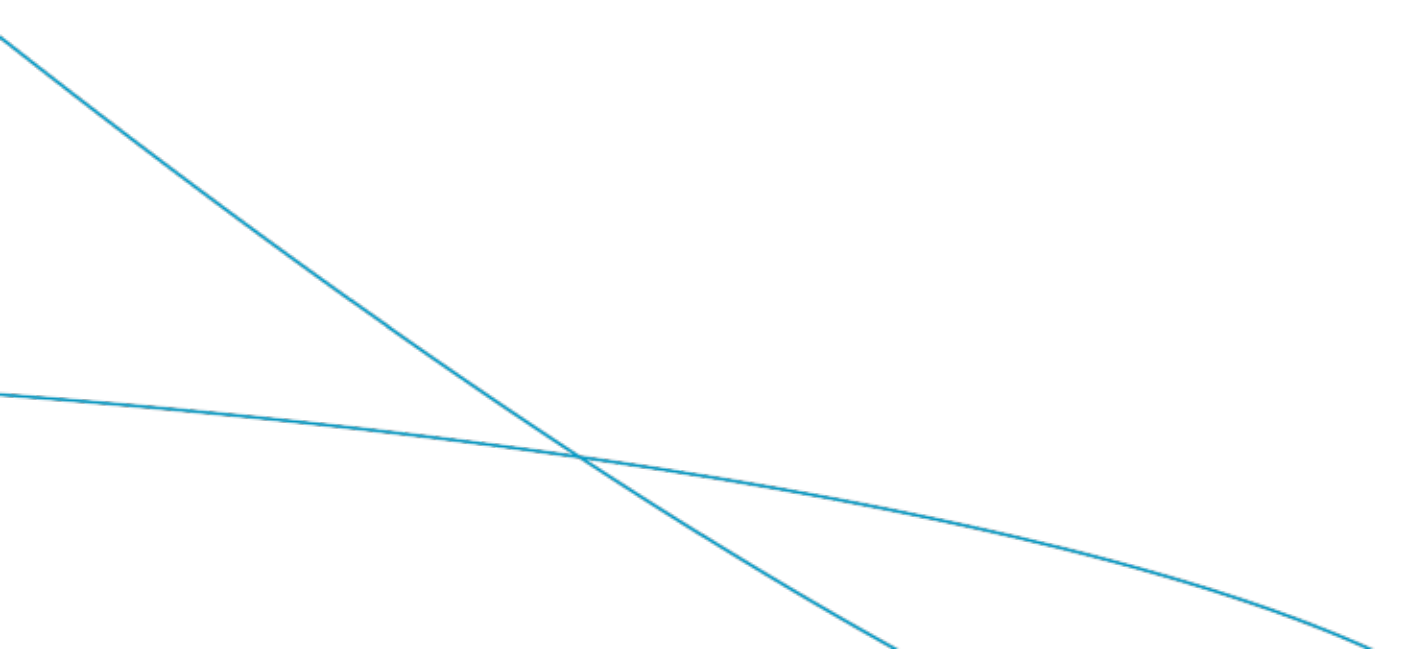
Washington, DC

*“Dr. Michael Gamel-McCormick has spent his career as a tireless champion for people with disabilities and their families. Colleagues describe him as an unparalleled advocate whose leadership in academia, federal policy, and national disability rights has had a measurable and lasting impact.”*



# *Passing of the Gavel*

**Ilka Riddle → Rhonda Eppelsheimer**

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**Thank you!**