



**The Jackie Crews Award
for Excellence in Leadership**

For Immediate Release

**Virginia Board for People with Disabilities Announces Winner
of the Jackie Crews Excellence in Leadership Award**

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The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD), Virginia's Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, is pleased to announce the selection of Edmond Turner as the first recipient of the Jackie Crews Excellence in Leadership Award.

The Excellence in Leadership Award affirms the legacy of Jackie Crews, a VBPD Partners in Policymaking graduate who died in April 2004, by honoring a self-advocate who has demonstrated exemplary service in Virginia on behalf of people with disabilities. This annual award, to be presented for the first time at the New Voices Conference taking place at the Richmond Marriott on October 6, 2005, includes a \$1000 stipend.

In his life and through his work, Ed Turner, who was born with cerebral palsy, exemplifies and advances the four goals of the Jackie Crews Award: *independence, productivity, inclusion, and self-determination*. As an early beneficiary of the 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guaranteeing access to public education for children with disabilities, Mr. Turner was inspired to live his life fully and independently and to become an example and mentor for others. In 1982, it was unusual for persons with severe disabilities to live on their own, but after joining the staff of the Endependence Center in Norfolk as a peer counselor, Mr. Turner took the bold step of moving from his parents' home to his own apartment. Clearly indicating his intentions to lead and encourage others, Mr. Turner told the press, "Now I consider myself a role model for the people I serve. I did not feel right talking the talk without walking the walk with them."

Mr. Turner continues to set an example and advocate strongly for people with disabilities, especially in the areas of employment, community service, and political activism. In his second term as a member of Virginia's Olmstead Oversight Advisory Committee, Mr. Turner is a leader in providing opportunities and support for people with disabilities to reside and work in the community. In 2004, after meeting with Mr. Turner, Governor Warner reaffirmed his commitment that Virginia's Vocational Rehabilitation Program for people with disabilities would be maintained regardless of changes being considered at the national level. Earlier this

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year, as an advisor to the Disability Commission, chaired by Lieutenant Governor Kaine, Mr. Turner cited his own twenty-five years of employment using Workplace Personal Assistance Services (WPAS). His example and advocacy led the Governor to include Workplace PAS as a part of his legislative proposal for the state's pilot Medicaid Buy-In Program.

Currently, Mr. Turner is completing development of a web-based training and certification curriculum for WPAS users and employers at Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention. He is also active as a leader and fundraiser in local and statewide politics, serving as the first person with a significant disability to chair Virginia's 3rd District Democratic Party Committee.

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities calls on all Virginians to congratulate and recognize Mr. Turner for his diligent work and his steadfast commitment to *independence, productivity, inclusion, and self determination* for all citizens.

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