

## 2016 CSCTFL Simon Award

Caterina (Cathy) Cregor Blitzer



Cathy Blitzer is an education and community leader dedicated to language learning and international understanding. Throughout her career she has applied multilingual skills and global competencies in public service, international business and community-based non-profit leadership. Before retiring as Indiana's World Languages Specialist, she collaborated with Indiana Foreign Language Teachers Association leaders to successfully advocate for the adoption of a Seal of Biliteracy and the launch of a \$1 million state-wide Dual Language Immersion Pilot Program Grant initiative for programs starting in K or grade 1.

During her tenure with the IDOE, she garnered business and foundation support for a state-wide program to advance global learning in Indiana schools. Educators throughout the state were provided opportunity to attend free Advancing Global Learning forums to dialogue with business and civic leaders speaking to the case for world languages and international education.

Previous leadership roles as Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, Executive Director of the International Center of Indianapolis, and Director of International education have also provided opportunity to advocate for the benefits of fluency in languages as an important asset in the workplace and in our diverse communities. Cathy Blitzer embodies the same commitment to language learners as the Award's namesake, Senator Paul Simon.

Some remarks from Caterina Blitzer's acceptance speech at the Awards Presentation in Columbus, Ohio, March 11, 2016:

*It is an extraordinary honor to receive the Paul Simon Award. How far sighted to keep advocacy for Foreign Language and International Studies in the forefront and so perpetuate the insightful, enduring leadership of Senator Paul Simon. This wonderful honor prompted reading – and re-reading - of Senator Paul Simon's The Tongue-Tied American. Every data point and recommendation rings too true 36 years later! The ability to work in international teams has become relentlessly more important and the gaps in our citizens' knowledge and world language abilities are all the more perilous.*

*Senator Simon's research coincides with the beginning of my journey with you in Central States world*

*language education. I brought our shared sense of urgency to my work at the International Trade Division of the Indiana Department of Commerce in the 1970's. A highlight of the job was collaboration with Dr. Walter Bartz and Dr. Lorraine Strasheim, storied Central States leaders and honorees. We used every opportunity to promote the study of world languages – in the business community and across disciplines.*

*A decade later, I was privileged to collaborate with John Mutz, Lieutenant Governor of Indiana and Simon Award honoree, and Indiana business and education leaders, on the establishment of Indiana's first K-12 language immersion programs.*

*And now, twenty years later, thanks to skillful advocacy by Israel Herrera and the Indiana Foreign Language Teachers Association leaders, the Indiana General Assembly approved a Dual Language Immersion in Elementary Schools Pilot Grant Program and the Certificate of Multilingual Proficiency for Indiana high school graduates based on the ACTFL guidelines for the Seal of Biliteracy. In 2015, Indiana became the ninth state in the nation and third in the Midwest with this essential recognition for high school students with passion and ability for languages.*

*Let us inspire – and help - each other to heed Senator Simon's recommendations on FOLLOW – THROUGH, in each of our roles, to continue achieving a series of small victories that prove that a relatively small number of people working for modest successes can turn things around.*

*Grazie, thank you and arrivederci along the way to our continued victories to overcome the linguistic malnourishment in our country!*