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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Maine Council on Aging Recognizes Inspired Leaders *2023 award recipients to be honored at Change AGent Summit*

[Brunswick, ME] - Today, the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) announced the 2023 award recipients who will be honored for their inspired and sustained leadership at the [CHANGE AGent Summit](#), on September 27, 2023.

“Our annual awards shine a spotlight on Maine people who are quietly dedicating part or all of their careers to making Maine a healthier, safer, more inclusive place to live and work for older Mainers,” said Jess Maurer, executive director of the Maine Council on Aging. “These honorees have had an impressive impact on the lives of older Mainers, and we honor them to ensure Maine people know about their important work and leadership.”

The **2023 Lasting Legacy Award** recognizes and celebrates the sustained leadership of people whose commitment, ideals, and actions throughout their careers have brought about lasting and positive change to the lives of older Mainers. Two individuals are honored this year, **Peggy Haynes of Freeport and Leo Delicata of Portland.**

For over two decades, **Margaret “Peggy” Haynes, MPA**, has consistently brought evidence-based programs and practices that support healthy aging to Maine. Her work as the MaineHealth Director of Elder Care Services centered around safeguarding the independence of older adults, with a significant emphasis on fall prevention. Peggy's dedication to enhancing care extended to areas such as care transitions, chronic care management, and reducing hospital readmissions. She has been a trailblazer in promoting end-of-life care that respects older adults' wishes through advance care planning and serious

illness conversation training. Her pioneering spirit and unwavering dedication have helped shape a more holistic approach to the care of older adults, transcending geographical boundaries.

Leo Delicata spent over 30 years in Maine advocating for public policy that supports healthy and secure aging, and creates equitable and just systems for vulnerable older people. A staff member at Legal Services for the Elderly, he lent his legal expertise on a broad range of topics, including real estate, taxes, health care, and the courts, and helped shape current laws providing protection from elder abuse and financial exploitation, and pathways to justice for those impacted. Through his knowledge, passion and compassion, Leo served as a mentor to many, including new lobbyists and legislators, and was the reliable source of knowledge on legislation impacting older Mainers for everyone under the dome.

The **2023 Legislator of the Year Award** recognizes and celebrates the sustained efforts of legislative leaders who actively champion legislative initiatives that improve the health, safety, and economic security of older Mainers and/or increase and improve access to quality aging services. This year's recipient is **Representative Michele Meyer** of Eliot Maine. Throughout her tenure in the Legislature, Representative Meyer has worked tirelessly to increase access older Mainers have to the supports and services they need, including Meals on Wheels and caregiver supports. Over the years, she has championed successful efforts to increase wages for direct care workers and to increase eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program, a program that puts money in the pockets of older, lower income people. She is collaborative and tenacious, and works incredibly hard, often behind the scenes, always reaching across the aisle, to ensure critically important bills are funded and enacted. She is a quiet leader who steps up for older Mainers, gets a lot done, and continues to ask what's next. She has earned our deep respect and gratitude.

The **2023 Trailblazing Advocate Award** recognizes and celebrates the sustained contributions of trailblazers whose passion, actions, and advocacy have made Maine a better place for us all to age with dignity, health, purpose, and security. This year's award goes to **Dr. Clifford Singer, of Orono and Bangor**. As Chief of the Center for Geriatric Cognitive and Mental Health at Northern Light Acadia Hospital and Research Professor at the University of Maine, Cliff is recognized for his sustained work to ensure older Mainers living with cognitive disorders can gain access to timely diagnosis, and expert care. Throughout his career, he has focused on collaborative education, family support and clinical care for people living with dementia. He has worked to bring more funding for research and treatment, and inspired health care professionals to provide dignified and effective care for people living with dementia. In recent years, he has built a research program to help find new treatments, and ultimately a cure, and is working to make Maine a center for excellence when it comes to dementia care.

The **Douglas O. Wilson Rising Tide Leadership Award**, awarded in partnership with Southern Maine Agency on Aging and Community Health Options, recognizes and celebrates the sustained efforts of people who lift and inspire others to implement innovative solutions to challenges faced by older Mainers through collaborative partnerships, shared leadership and/or community building initiatives. This year's recipient is **Patricia Oh of Bowdoinham**. From her leadership of Maine's first designated age-friendly community, Bowdoinham, to her current work at the University of Maine Center on Aging, Patricia has inspired everyday people to volunteer to build communities that work for a lifetime. From volunteer food and driver programs to dementia-friendly initiatives and shared housing, Patricia helps others develop the skills needed to implement programs that make a community truly "lifelong." She is the driving force behind the Lifelong Communities Fellows Program, an effort that places established

community leaders with developing communities. Her efforts are quietly ensuring that thousands of older Mainers can live healthy, engaged, and secure lives in their homes and communities.

The **2023 Business Excellence Award** recognizes and celebrates the sustained efforts of Maine employers that implement strategic practices and policies that value and sustain the contributions of older workers, support family caregivers, and/or create environments that meet the needs of older people, people living with dementia, and family caregivers. This year's honoree is **Hannaford Supermarkets**. Hannaford maintains a sustained commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion that includes age-diversity, and their leaders are intentionally building a workplace culture that supports a multi-generational workforce and considers the flexibility needs of older and younger workers alike. They intentionally include age-diversity in their list of priority organizations for sponsorships and grants, putting them in the tiny minority of funders who do so. Finally, early in the pandemic, Hannaford led the way in ensuring older people could access the food they needed by offering dedicated shopping hours for people aged 60 and older and those with compromised immune systems.

These inspiring leaders and business will be honored at the Maine Council on Aging's Annual Meeting & Dinner on September 26th at Maple Hill Farm in Hallowell, and at the Change AGent Summit on September 27th at the Augusta Civic Center. **Press credentials offered to any reporter wishing to cover these events.** Summit registration information is found [here](#).

About Maine Council on Aging: The Maine Council on Aging is a broad, multi-disciplinary network of more than 135 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older Mainers working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives in our homes and community settings. For more information: www.mainecouncilonaging.org

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