

**Margaret H. Trahan is the recipient of the Community Impact Award presented by Leaders In Philanthropy Awards.**



Margaret has more than two decades of experience as a nonprofit director and leader throughout Acadiana. Currently, Margaret serves as the Director of Stewardship and Development for the Diocese of Lafayette. Before her new role with the Diocese, she was the President/CEO of United Way of Acadiana (UWA) for 24 years.

As a nonprofit leader, Margaret has raised more than \$80 million in her career. She orchestrated a merger with the Volunteer Center of Lafayette; led the establishment of the Community Foundation of Acadiana; and co-founded Acadiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (AVOAD).

To maximize organizational impact, she brought outcomes measurement to the region and then led UWA in its transition to a community impact business model. She established a nonprofit multi-tenant center and gave UWA its first permanent home where it has mobilized millions of pounds of donated goods in times of disaster. She also oversaw the expansion of Leader in Me in six parishes to 66 schools in the region which impacts more than 30,000 students.

Margaret has learned a lot about herself over the years as a nonprofit director. Her father taught her that the secret of a happy life is contribution, not accumulation. He was a small-town doctor who practiced medicine because he loved it and wanted to help others. He always gave more than he received and gave the credit to God, which was a powerful example for her.

Margaret gave up her teaching career to be a full-time mom when her children were young. She found time to engage with her church and with community organizations like the Junior League of Lafayette. As a member of the League, she gained hands-on experiences in community service, project research and development, community needs assessments, fund-raising, marketing, financial management, strategic planning as well as volunteer management. And as it turns out, these are the very skills that a non-profit leader needs. She was invited to serve on various community boards, one of which was United Way of Acadiana. She experienced first-hand the mission of this organization and was inspired.

“I liked the emphasis on accountability and results as well as the way they collaborated with other community organizations to address tough issues like educational success, financial stability and the needs of the working poor,” said Margaret.

She returned to work when her children were school age, but this time in the business sector working for a local weekly publication in advertising sales. Her volunteer and business experiences landed her the position of President/CEO of United Way of Acadiana, a position she held for more than two decades.

In May, Margaret retired from UWA and accepted a position with the Diocese of Lafayette. This new opportunity enables Margaret to live her faith in a more direct way by working within the eight civil parishes of the Diocese that encompasses 121 church parishes and more than 30 Catholic schools. Her role with the Diocese will tap into her skills and experiences in fund-raising and volunteer mobilization.