

### **2013 – David James Wood, Ph.D.**

David Wood's graduation from Elida High School in 1966 began a career of advocacy on behalf of children with disabilities. He received a BA degree in English from The Ohio State University, an MS degree in Special Education from the University of Saint Francis and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Toledo. Additional post-graduate study was completed at Indiana University, Bowling Green State University, Colorado State University and Harvard University.

After receipt of his bachelor's degree, Dr. Wood taught in public and private schools as well as several colleges and universities at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. He served as Assistant Superintendent for eight years with a ten district consortium of school districts in northwest Indiana while teaching at Indiana University and Purdue University. Subsequent to that, he served as Executive Director of Exceptional Student Services for sixteen years in the Aurora, Colorado, public schools while teaching at Metropolitan State College of Denver.

Additionally during this time, he led the *Colorado Education Policy Fellowship Program* in conjunction with the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. When construction of the Denver International Airport brought hundreds of immigrant families to his district as construction workers, he initiated (in conjunction with the Mexican Consulate of Denver and the Program of Mexican Communities Abroad) an alternative high school program for their teenage sons and daughters deemed too far behind in their studies to graduate on time from a Colorado high school.

He served for eight years on the faculty of Florida Southern College where he was instrumental in establishing the school's Master of Arts in Teaching degree. Also while at Florida Southern, he was awarded an endowed faculty chair from which he initiated the *Roberts Center for Learning and Literacy* which brought experts in dyslexia to campus and partnered with local schools to provide intensive teacher training in the field.

In 2010, he decided to spend the balance of his career where it all started, back in the public schools. He currently serves as Principal of the Jean O'Dell Learning Center, one of three schools serving the most cognitively and physically challenged students in a district of 96,000 students.

He is the author of numerous school board policies and curricula and has spoken at conferences across several states. He has successfully obtained millions of dollars in grants at both the state and federal levels and is a recipient of the *National Leadership Award* from the Institute for Educational Leadership. He is a biographee in *Who's Who in the West*, *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who of Emerging Leaders in America*, and the *International Directory of Distinguished Leadership*.

He has been married to his wife, Linda, for 40 years and is the father of two daughters, one of whom is a school psychologist and one of whom has special needs. He is currently writing a book of daily reflections for parents and educators on what matters most when raising a special child.