

Dear Colleagues,

I am incredibly honored to receive the 2024 John Stecklein Distinguished Member Award. While few of us may have begun our careers intending to follow the institutional research path, I may have had one of the more unusual roads to IR. I got in some trouble with my family in my senior year of high school, so even though I was a good student, I didn't get to go to college. I started work as a bank teller and then was hired by one of my bank customers to manage the office for his repo agency. I married one of the repo guys and after our first child was born and it was clear that I needed to go back to work, a neighbor suggested Ohio State as a great employer. After failing my typing test three times(!), I was hired as a typist in OSU's College of Education. I moved up to be a secretary in the Department of German, and that was literally life-changing. Professor Hugo Bekker stopped by my desk one day and said "Julie, you are too smart to do this the rest of your life. You must take classes and get your degree." I replied "But I have two children...I could only ever take one class per quarter. It would take me eight years – I'd be 32 (gasp!!!) when I finished." To which he replied "Oh I see – and how old will you be in eight years if you do not get your degree?" The scales fell from my eyes! So I did my undergrad degree and then my master's degree all one class per quarter – sometimes with a few additional credits thrown in. I kept moving up the ladder – administrative assistant, facilities planning officer, strategic planning analyst – until I reached the pinnacle of my career as the Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning. I had phenomenal support from everyone I worked for and with. This includes my wonderful AIR colleagues, so many of whom have become dear friends as well over the years. And I could not have achieved the successes I have had without the love and support of my second and forever husband, Don Hubin.

I am grateful to all those who wrote on behalf of my nomination for this award and to so many colleagues who have inspired me to think in new ways. The work we do as institutional researchers is both important and fun – we solve interesting puzzles that support the enrichment of our students, faculty, and staff. But it is the support and friendship of our wonderful colleagues that creates more than a career, but also a community. I am ever so proud to be a member of our incredible IR community, and I thank you for accepting me and for this tremendous honor.

Julie Carpenter-Hubin