

It is my pleasure to enthusiastically recommend Mr. Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADC for NAADAC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Legend Award.

My name is Lonnetta Albright, President/Owner of Forward Movement Inc., Executive Director with the John Maxwell International Leadership Team, and retired Executive Director/Principal Investigator of the Great Lakes Addiction Technology Transfer Center/Jane Addams College of Social Work, University of Illinois at Chicago where I served in that role for 17 years. I have known Mr. Sanders for more than two decades.

I had the pleasure of working with and getting to know Mark during my tenure at the Great Lakes ATTC. Prior to that I had always heard his name, the work he was doing on behalf of individuals, families, and communities; and the impact that he was having in the lives of others. That is what most stands out for me that I would like to convey. I have learned that success is about the individual – ambition, climbing the ladder, and personal recognition. But significance, making a difference is about others. That is what I have witnessed and experienced with Mark. He is a “Ladder Builder.” That’s what Legends do. He has and continues to make a difference for those impacted by the disease of Addiction, as well as the professionals, peers, systems, government, research and a wide and diverse range of formal and informal entities and human beings in the Addiction Recovery Field.

As a new Director, and frankly new to the field I, my ATTC, the region we served, and the nation owe much of our success to Mark. A little insight into this man is that his personal qualities, such as integrity, patience, intellectual curiosity, wisdom, and a willingness to share his experience and knowledge is how we all have benefitted. Mark believes in the potential of every human being he meets. He has a way of helping people to believe in their own potential, shifting the way that they think, understanding that they are worthy and deserve to live a quality of life in their community and in their profession life.

His value around social justice is anchored in cultural humility which teaches us to suspend what we think we know about an individual based on the “group, race, culture” they belong to. Mark sees and collaborates with each person in a person-centered and strength-based way.

Mark’s commitment to advancing the addiction profession is broad and deep. He is an author, curriculum developer, trainer, educator, motivational speaker, researcher, board member, mentor, advocate and so much more. His career dates back to the 1980s as a counselor, quickly moving into a supervisor role.

During my work with Mark, we led the ATTC national network in helping the Addiction Field to shift from the traditional understanding of Treatment only to the transformation of recovery-oriented system and services. This work led Mark to partner with national experts such as William White, Drs Ijeoma Achara, Arthur Evans, Larry Davidson, and others. Mark’s training, articles, tools, and approaches continue to be a huge asset to professionals, clinical and non-clinical in developing and serving in roles that benefit the persons served, their families and communities in achieving and sustaining long-term recovery.

Mark's mission and purpose has always been to elevate those who work in the field. It would take a longer letter to share how and what he has done to demonstrate his commitment but here is a snapshot. During the past thirty plus years Mark:

1. Has been a certified addictions counselor for more than 35 years
2. Is past president of the board of the Illinois Chapter of NAADAC
3. Developed one of the first integrated dual disorders programs in the nation
4. Is the author of five books, has had two stories published in the New York Times best-selling Chicken Soup for the Soul series
5. Received numerous awards including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Illinois Addiction Counselor Certification and the Barbara Bacon Award for outstanding contributions to the Social Work profession as an Alumni of Loyola University of Chicago
6. Is co-founder of Serenity Academy of Chicago, the first recovery high school in Illinois
7. Has taught at 7 academic institutions (Addiction Studies, Social Work, Psychology)
8. Directed the COPE Training Institute in the early nineties of the first African and Southeast Asian Addiction Counselor Training program
9. Consults with the Illinois Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery
10. Consulted with Mercy Home for Boys and Girls
11. Is President/Owner of On The Mark Consulting, an international speaking, training, clinical and consultation organization
12. Created assessment tools for the admissions process
13. Created and led Evidence Based groups which integrated Motivational Interviewing, Motivational Incentives, Cannabis Manualized Treatment, and the Matrix Model.
14. Has published journal articles
15. Has trained thousands of professionals around the globe
16. Is a sought-after speaker, trainer, and coach
17. Mark's life's objective is the empowerment of individuals and organizations to reach their potential through education, speaking, training, and consulting

As I think about Legends and what it means, Mark Sanders is a Living Legend who continues to give of himself. He is popular, admired and is known and considered the "go to" person for any question or assistance that an Addiction Recovery professional might have. If he doesn't have the answer he uses his "connection powers" and has developed partnerships across the nation and internationally. You only need to google him or search social media where you will find Mark serving the seasoned and the next generation of professionals in the field.

I am confident without reservation that Mr. Mark Sanders would be an excellent recipient of NAADAC's Legend Award. If you need additional information please do not hesitate to contact me at [lonnettaalbright@gmail.com](mailto:lonnettaalbright@gmail.com).

I am honored to also call Mark my friend. I wish him continued significance in his life and dedication to a field that is his life's work.

Sincerely,

Lonnetta M Albright