

Past President Theresa Walton started in that role in 2012. She served as Board President in 2008 and stayed with us in that role until 2012. The Board created the Past President position to ensure continuation of leadership, allow wisdom and experience to be passed down, and to keep our precious commodities (volunteers and experts) just a little bit longer!

Theresa “has provided a cool, calm, and collected leadership as NAMI continued to aggressively and progressively grow” during her tenure. She is noted as “bringing level-headed wisdom and compassion” to every growing pain and discussion that happened while serving as part of the Board.

Quotes from NAMI Lexington Annual Report 2012

**Additional comments written by guest writer
Sheila A. Schuster, Ph.D. for NAMI Lexington 4/21/14:**

Theresa Walton has been a stalwart in the mental health advocacy community for many years. She was an integral part of the early years of establishing the KY Mental Health Coalition (KMHC) as the “hub” of advocacy work on behavioral health issues, predating even the NAMI movement here in Kentucky. No job was too big or too small for Theresa – from setting up our booth at the State Fair to taking minutes at the meetings to making calls to legislators – she did it all!

In her role as the Executive Director of the KY Psychiatric Association, Theresa worked hard – and very successfully – to bring psychiatrists in every possible way into the world of advocacy and collaboration. She involved them in educational events such as an annual Clergy Breakfast, in planning and taking part in the early NAMI Walks at the local level, in financially contributing to the operation of KMHC, and in providing input on policy and advocacy initiatives.

My experiences with Theresa over the years have led me to describe her as an invaluable member of the advocacy team. As the “go-to” person when you needed to have something done. As one of the most reliable colleagues I have ever had the pleasure of working with. As being willing to do any job – no matter what it was – if it led to the success of the event.

One of my fondest memories was when the national Mental Health flag traveled through Kentucky for an event in the Capitol Rotunda. We had gathered a large crowd of advocates who were there to hear the Lt. Governor and a number of legislators pledge their support for mental health. In the middle of the speeches, I looked up from the podium to see Theresa up on the second-floor landing, preparing for our post-event reception. Every one of us was in the limelight or in the middle of the action, but Theresa was acting as she always did...in the background, getting the job done. We would not be where we are now as an advocacy community without the long years of help from Theresa Walton!