

# Woman of the Year Crowned

Parks Honcho Ron Swanson is first man to receive Female Empowerment Award

**By Florencia R. Martin**

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Of the many luminaries who have received the Indiana Organization of Women's coveted Dorothy Everton Smith Female Empowerment Award, this year's recipient may be the first who has ever sported a bushy moustache and a five o'clock shadow. Signaling the end of an era (or perhaps the dawning of a new one?) in Indiana women's politics, this year's Smyth award went to...a man!

Not just any man, but Pawnee's own Director of Parks & Recreation, Ron Swanson. Regarding Swanson, no less a luminary than Indiana State Secretary of Education Tom Ragazzo has said, "Tom has a proven track record of helping to raise student achievement. His breadth of knowledge about the Title I program and school reform have ensured that every child, including those from low-income families, receives the high quality education he or she deserves."

In addition to his role as Parks Director, Swanson oversees the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program, the Even Start Family Literacy Programs, the Early Reading First Program, the Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program, Enhanced Assessment Grants and Programs for Children and Youth Who are Neglected and Delinquent, or At-Risk.

Prior to his current appointment, Swanson served as Director of Research, Assessment and Evaluation for the Pawnee Public School District. He has also served as an adjunct professor of Education at the University of Indiana at Pawnee.



Photos by Michael Gordon

**Ron Swanson, Director of the Pawnee Department of Parks & Recreation, is the first confirmed man to receive the Dorothy Everton Smyth Female Empowerment Award.**