

AUTUMN 2017



Marilyn Regier,
Executive Director & CEO,
2002-2017

Marilyn Regier Retires as Barker Executive Director

An Appreciation by Chris Intagliata

Good-byes are tough. Sometimes, though, boundless appreciation and gratitude for a leader's service overwhelms the sadness. That's my state-of-mind today in recognizing Marilyn Regier's retirement as Executive Director of the Barker Adoption Foundation. When Marilyn first joined the staff, she asked me to write the newsletter article announcing her appointment. Since I am now coming full circle with this column, I beg the reader's indulgence to write from a personal perspective.

In the fall of 2002, The Barker Foundation was an agency in crisis. The legacy of passionate commitment within the Barker community remained strong, but two years of leadership turmoil following Robin Allen's retirement had left many of us on the Board wondering how we could regain our footing as an organization united in shared values and thriving in a common mission. I was personally distraught, plagued by the prospect of witnessing the disintegration of an organization I deeply loved. The ray of hope that eventually poked its way through those bleak months was the possibility that the Executive Director post might be filled by Marilyn Regier, a Barker parent and an accomplished director of adoption programs and services at Adoption Service Information Agency. When Marilyn told the search committee that she would accept the position, I wanted to dance and cry at the same time (and as I recall, did a

little of each). I knew that something I cherished had been rescued from the brink.

Fifteen years later, my expectations have been exceeded far beyond what I could have imagined.

In the three years before Marilyn took office, Barker placed an average of 30 children per year. Over the past decade, the agency has averaged 102 placements annually. Moreover, this growth has occurred in a difficult adoption environment – with significant cuts in international adoption and intense domestic competition from internet operators. But with every challenge, Marilyn and her staff found ways to respond – from developing understanding and acceptance of the special needs program in China to updating the agency website. The result of all those creative and intelligent responses: the creation of more forever families.

As Marilyn always maintains, however, numbers don't tell the whole story. As Barker trustee Shelley Holt, puts it, "We all love Barker and what it means to our families. And Marilyn has shown us what passion and dedication for ethical adoption practices should look like. She has dedicated her career and life for the creation of families, protecting children first and foremost. I have learned so much from Marilyn and am grateful for knowing her."

In reviewing Marilyn's leadership, there are many stories to tell. Marilyn established Barker adoption programs in both China and Korea

and carried the agency through the staggeringly rigorous process of attaining Hague accreditation. She hired the first director of post-adoption, established the post-adoption database, and initiated homeland tours to Colombia. In the last 15 years, Barker has become a more inclusive organization, with communities of color well represented among our Board, staff, and clients. Under her skilled development leadership, Legacy II was launched, currently totaling 10 million dollars and providing more than \$400,000 every year to support programs.

When asked how she views the changes she spear-headed, Marilyn responds, "While it is difficult to choose one single significant aspect, I do think Project Wait No Longer was perhaps the most important initiative during my tenure, because it responded to such a huge national need." The national need to move children from foster care into permanent homes was and remains pressing, but it is the fulfilled *individual* needs of the 121 older children who have gained a family through Project Wait No Longer that remind one of the impact one person can make in the lives of others.

Beverly Clarke, Director of Project Wait No Longer, elaborates:

The impact of Marilyn's work, dedication, and leadership is difficult to put into words, but is so clearly demonstrated in the standards that are held by

continued on page 2



FROM THE *Executive Director and CEO*

Dear Members of The Barker Adoption Foundation community,

As I write my final column as your Executive Director, I again want to express deepest thanks to all of you for your steadfast support. I am so appreciative of the remarkable Boards and the Board Chairs with whom I worked: Evan Himelfarb, Nonie Akman, John Harris, Bob Long, John Duff, Kathryn Bucher, Gary Rappaport, and John Freeman. For the countless supporters of the organization and for the uncommonly talented staff, I am profoundly grateful. Finally, I am so very grateful to my husband, Darrel, and to my four adult “children” who also believed in Barker’s mission. I close by reprinting my farewell letter, and I wish each of you much joy in the years ahead.

July 27, 2017

Dear Barker Family and Friends,

I am writing to share with you my intention to retire from my position as Executive Director & CEO of The Barker Adoption Foundation, effective August 31st. In early May, I notified the Boards of Trustees of both The Barker Adoption Foundation and the Friends of Barker, but I have waited to write to the larger community until the Board named my successor.

I am delighted that our Associate Director, Susan Hollar, will serve as your next chief executive. Sue has been at Barker eleven of my fifteen years here, and she has served as Associate Director for the past five years. I know under her stewardship, Barker will maintain its high standards of excellence.

As for me, at the age of 73, and with ten grandchildren and another on the way, I felt this was the year to step down and begin the next chapter of my life. I plan to visit all those grandchildren who wonder why I am always so busy! I also hope to resume parts of my former music career and possibly do some adoption-related writing.

It has been the honor of a lifetime to work with such dedicated Boards, staff, and community supporters. There are so many highlights that come to mind, but to name a few: the addition of Korean and Chinese programs; *Project Wait No Longer* for older foster youth; the Columbia Homeland Tour; development of a Post-Adoption Department; concerted outreach to communities of color; website development; and of major importance, the Legacy II campaign. I will leave with no regrets, but rather with a heart full of gratitude to all of you for your support and friendship as we worked on behalf of children and families, and with the satisfaction of knowing that almost every goal I set for myself and the agency has largely been accomplished. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without your devotion, expertise, and generosity. Now it is time for new leadership and new initiatives.

Thank you again for the honor of serving Barker, as we together served those in our immediate and global communities.

With my gratitude,

Marilyn Regier

Marilyn Regier Retires as Barker Executive Director

continued from page 1

this agency. Her commitment to ethical adoption and supporting the families we have helped to create has always come first, and is evident in the advocacy work and the programming offered by Barker. Marilyn has a unique ability to engage people, and I have often been in awe of the sheer number of meaningful and supportive relationships she has maintained through the years.

Those relationships can change the agency, often in small ways, and sometimes profoundly. I sat next to Marilyn at the Angels in Adoption event where we first heard Jelani Freeman speak about the needs of children in foster care. I could see the glint in Marilyn’s eye as she

determined to contact this compelling young man. Twelve years later, Jelani has become a key member of the Board of Trustees and the Barker community, contributing the skills and perspective that Marilyn recognized we needed. As always with Marilyn, the contributions flow in both directions. “Marilyn has helped foster my growth as a person,” Jelani writes. “She has afforded me community, connection and love in abundance. And she has served as a role model for me – a true professional, respected by all, doing her work with heart and passion.”

Marilyn’s combination of business and marketing savvy, effective management of people,

and emotional intelligence not only brought Barker out of crisis and re-established a coherent, ethical standard for the organization, it lifted the agency into new spheres of stability and influence. John Harris, former Chair of the Barker Board of Trustees and member of the search committee that hired Marilyn, reflects, “When I think of Barker, I think of Marilyn Regier. Her fifteen years of strong leadership, vision, and grace transformed Barker into a world-class organization.”

Good-byes are tough. And while I won’t guarantee no tears will be shed, I’d say a dance of celebration is in order – to thank Marilyn for the strong and vibrant gift she’s leaving us. ■



Robin Allen and Marilyn Regier at April 2005 Dedication of new Maryland office.

A Message From Barker's Board Chair

Adoption has changed considerably from the time when Cindy and I first adopted over 36 years ago. Our two sons born in Chile (American Adoption Agency), now are 36 and 33 years old, and were 20 days and 21 days old when they were placed with us; and our daughter is now 34 years old (Barker) and was placed at 6 weeks of age. Compared to today, there were many similarities in the adoption process with some challenges, but today's adoption world is more complex, ever changing, with greater challenges. These challenges include the internet virtual agencies, new

International laws, increased domestic regulations, individual country pride, and more regulations, including The Hague Treaty. Through all this, Barker has been able to overcome these never-ending changes because of strong leadership from Marilyn Regier, our Executive Director over the last 15 years. Furthermore, we have been fortunate to have a dedicated Associate Director in Sue Hollar, a strong staff, and a committed Board of Trustees, made up of a diverse group of adoptive parents, adoptees, birth parents, and professionals, all giving their personal time, passion, and expertise to

Barker. Thankfully we also have many volunteers and generous financial support from the Barker Community. As the new Board Chair, I want to thank each of you for your contributions and urge you to continue this strong tradition.

With this background, I am proud to introduce Sue Hollar as our new Executive Director, succeeding Marilyn, who after 15 years has decided to retire and enjoy life with her family, her husband, and spend more time with her grandchildren, as well as resume her passion and love for music.

Sue brings over 10 years of dedication and experience with Barker and has been our Associate Director for the last 5 years. As such, she and Marilyn have worked together closely on Barker programs and policies. Sue is ready to go and excited to be our new Executive Director. Likewise, the Board of Trustees and I are excited to have Sue leading us into the future, and she was unanimously chosen by the Board. Many of you already know Sue, and in the coming year, many more will come to know her. Sue and her husband, Dave, reside in the District of Columbia and have three wonderful daughters.

Marilyn has done so much for Barker. She became Executive Director over 15 years ago when Barker was struggling and needed direction and care. Under her strong leadership Marilyn has guided us through many changes in adoption and leaves in place a strong and dedicated staff. She has worked hard, giving her time and love to Barker. We will miss her, but she is not going away. She is still very much part of Barker. The Barker Community and the Board of Trustees plan on honoring Marilyn in 2018.

With the Board of Trustees, I look forward to Sue and our Barker staff continuing the tradition of Barker being one of the premier adoption agencies in the country. This requires all of us to continue providing our personal and financial support to Barker, so we may continue our mission of building families and providing counseling services.

Thank you all for your support.

Howard



Howard Menditch and wife Cindy celebrate his election as Board Chair and the presentation of his Richard B. Barker Award at the Annual Meeting, May 16. Pictured, left to right, (back): Son Joshua, Howard, daughter Melanie, son-in-law Patrick. Front row: Son Noah, and Cindy.

Susan Hollar Selected to Lead Barker

Susan Hollar was unanimously selected as Barker's next Executive Director at a special meeting of the Board of Trustees on July 13, 2017. Sue has a long and outstanding eleven-year history with Barker, five years of which were as Associate Director. She begins her directorship September 1, 2017, and is already well known to many Barker families.

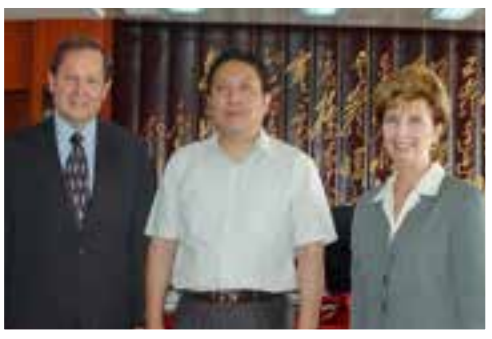


Barker Staff Presentations

PWNL Director **Beverly Clarke** teamed up with Brandi Hill, Supervisor of the Adoption and Guardianship Unit at Prince George's County Department of Social Services to present at the Adoption Exchange Association conference in Las Vegas, and at the Family Focused Treatment Association conference in Chicago, sharing Barker's highly effective model for private/public partnership in PWNL. These presentations are part of Barker's commitment to being a change agent within the public child welfare system.

Varda Makovsky, Barker's Director of Family and Post-Adoption Services, was selected as a presenter at the National Council for Adoption's annual conference on June 22th in Denver Colorado. Her presentation entitled "The Impact of the Internet and Genetic Testing on the Process of Adoption Reunion" explored the significant changes in adoption reunion, and also presented a newly developed counseling model called "retroactive search counseling" designed to help people who are in crisis and seeking assistance after their reunions – instead of receiving proactive reunion counseling. ■





Fifth Annual “Barker Goes Nats!” Event

The Barker Adoption Foundation’s annual summer tradition just keeps getting better! It was our 5th year and we had Barker Board members, supporters, families and staff on hand to enjoy a gorgeous day at the ballpark on Sunday June 25th as the Nationals took on the Reds. Once again, The Barker Adoption Foundation was awarded the National’s “Spirit Award” in recognition of its commitment to outstanding

adoption services throughout the Washington, DC area. The crowd cheered loudly as Barker’s name was featured in bright letters on the Jumbotron and the bright smiles and cheerful waves of Barker’s honored guests appeared on the field.

Thanks to the generosity of 40 corporate and individual sponsors, Barker raised over \$85,000 to provide vital support for Barker’s operational costs and programs,

including pregnancy counseling, older child foster youth adoption, domestic and international adoption and post-adoption services. This annual tradition is Barker’s largest fundraising event of the year and we are grateful for the exceptional

leadership of the sponsors and families who supported it.

We look forward to seeing many of you at next year’s Barker Goes Nats event. Stay tuned for dates and information about sponsorship and ticket purchases. ■

- With Sympathy -

We express our heartfelt sympathy to families who mourn the loss of their loved ones.

Trish Niffenegger, of Montgomery Village, Maryland, on May 4 at the age of 56. Trish was the beloved sister of Barker’s Senior Domestic Program Assistant, Kathie Lehner. In addition to Kathie, Trish is survived by many loving family members that include her husband, three adult children, one grandchild and her five siblings.

Lisa Gay McFarlane, of Cincinnati, Ohio, passed away at the age of 53 in June 2017. She was predeceased by Barker parents, Truman and Jeanne Griswold. We are grateful to those who remembered her with memorial gifts to Barker.

Laura Kern Aldrighetti, of Takoma Park, Maryland, cherished wife of Rino Aldrighetti, and loving mother of Nina and Peter, died on June 9, 2017, at the age of 66.

Jim Vance, legendary newscaster, died on July 22, 2017, at the age of 75. Jim was a proud Barker grandfather who spoke at a number of special Barker events. We send our sympathies to his entire family, remembering in particular his daughter, Dawn, and grandson Drew.

John Finley, beloved husband of Lois Finley, and father of Fritz (Camille) and Kristin (Matthew), passed away on July 29, 2017, at his home in Bethesda, Maryland. He is also survived by three devoted grandchildren. Lois, a past Board Chair, and John were active in Barker’s life for many years.

Susan Barnett Rech, beloved Barker mother, died on July 28, 2017, in Portland, Oregon, at the age of 68. She is survived by her husband, Jim, and by her son and daughter, Hamilton and Katherine. The family designated The Barker Adoption Foundation as a memorial gift recipient.

Sigrid Washington, beloved mother of Barker Board member Adrian Washington (Donna Rattley Washington), passed away on August 9, 2017, in Washington, DC, at the age of 89. She is survived by her three children, Derrick, Brenda, and Adrian, by five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and many others who loved her.



Barker Welcomes New Director of Development

Anne Christman joined the staff as the Director of Development in May. Anne brings valuable experience to bear as an experienced development specialist, an attorney and adoptive parent. Anne began her adoption journey twenty-four years ago with a Barker home study and is excited to learn about all the new programs and amazing services that Barker offers today.



Anne Christman,
Director of Development

Anne’s first stop was up-at-bat planning a successful 5th Annual “Barker Goes Nats!” and she had a great opportunity to meet Board members, supporters, volunteers and Barker families. Anne is excited to bring her development experience and passion for adoption

to the development efforts at Barker. ■

Barker's Colombia Homeland Tour Creates Lasting Memories

The chatter began just moments after they stepped off the plane in Bogotá. Four Barker families began to enthusiastically recount the days and weeks they spent in Colombia when they adopted their children many years ago. For some, it had been thirty years since they were last in Colombia and while a lot about the city had changed, their fond memories never faded.

Barker's 2017 Colombia Homeland Tour, led by Sue Hollar, Carolina Kenrick, Barbara Donesky and Maria Teresa de' Perez was, by all accounts, a great success. Tour members enjoyed a full day at FANA that included meeting with a birth mother, spending countless

hours playing outside with the children, and an opportunity to meet with FANA staff to review their adoption files. The remaining days of the eight-day tour were spent visiting the wonderful and varied sites of Bogotá, eating traditional Colombian food, drinking coffee, and spending time with Barker clinicians during nightly support sessions. More information about Barker's Homeland Tours, including a 2018 Trip to Korea, can be found on our website. ■

The Colombia Homeland Tour gathers on the FANA steps for a group photo.



Congratulations to Our New Arrivals

Alessandro & Valeria welcomed Luigi

Aloysious & Diana welcomed Caitlyn

Anthony & Karen welcomed Tony

Arnie & Jeana welcomed Ryder & Avery

Arvind & Sukhvir welcomed Amyra

Barry & Melanie welcomed Eli

Bill & Jennifer welcomed Hannah

Brad & Maria welcomed Serafina

Bratt & Pauline welcomed Derek

Bright & Costanza welcomed Darian

Brooks & Katie welcomed Andrew

Bruce & Holly welcomed Carly

Bryndon & Megan welcomed Brenna

Chris & Jacquie welcomed Joseph

Christa welcomed Cora

Christina & Pili welcomed Lily

Christina welcomed Luna

Christopher & Emily welcomed June

Dan & Bethany welcomed Zelie-Louise

Dan & Nina welcomed Selene

Daniel & Melissa welcomed Elyse

Danielle welcomed Patience

David & Lynn welcomed Christopher

David & Rebecca welcomed Jose & Jolette

Douglas welcomed Tonorris

Erik & Emily welcomed Noa

Ganesh & Naveena welcomed Nirvan

Geoff & Jennifer welcomed Ava

Howard & Kathy welcomed Ellis

Jake & Sarah welcomed Finley

James & Alisa welcomed Alexandra

James & Nicole welcomed Timothy

James & Rosario welcomed Juan David

Timothy & Jennifer welcomed Rachel

Jeremy & Jan welcomed Joy

Jermain & Jason welcomed Jalen

Josh & Darryl welcomed Frederick

Justin & Megan welcomed Aniya

Kevin & Chris welcomed Sophie

Kevin & Jane welcomed Ryan

Kyle & Christine welcomed Benjamin

Manfred & Stacy welcomed Aden & Mason

Matt & Katie welcomed Miriam

Michael & Julia welcomed Hope

Mike & Jennifer welcomed Gabriel

Mindy welcomed Armani

Niles & Tani welcomed Raven

Noel & Alex welcomed Eleanor

Peter & Diana welcomed Samuel

Rajeev & Pallavi welcomed Kairavi

Rex & Kirsten welcomed Caileigh

Rich & Karen welcomed Veronica

Rich & Natalie welcomed Sam

Richard & Pauline welcomed John Paul

Rob & Allie welcomed RJ

Rochelle & Sioban welcomed Julia

Shalom & Adam welcomed Eliza

Steve & Sonia welcomed Andrew

Terence & Mari welcomed Meadow

Tilla & Brenda welcomed Kailah

Trekker & Becky welcomed Wren

Viet & Avery welcomed Avery

Vinoo & Smriti welcomed Rohan

Willard & Sharon welcomed Janelle

Yung Hsien & Hoshing welcomed Daniel

Save the Date

Barker Annual Family Picnic – September 24th, 1:00 to 4:00 PM, Cabin John Regional Park, Rockville

Annual Appeal Phonathon – September 26th and 27th, 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Fall Kids' Groups for 1st–5th Graders – October 21st and 28th, Interested families should contact Varda Makovsky at vmakovsky@barkerfoundation.org

Barker Teen Connections – November 11th, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, 4-H Center, Chevy Chase

Annual Adoption & Foster Care Conference – March 17th, 2018, The Universities at Shady Grove Conference Center, Rockville

Ongoing Events

Parents of Adopted Adolescents and High School Aged Teens – 1st Tuesday of the month, 7:00 PM, Maryland office

Adoptive Parents in Open and Semi-Open Adoptions Group – 1st Thursday of the month, 7:30 PM, Maryland office

Parents of Adopted Young Adults Support Group – 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00 PM, Maryland office

PRIDE After Placement – 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 PM, Maryland office, Interested families should contact Jenny Beers at jbeers@barkerfoundation.org

Birth Parent Discussion Group – 2nd Thursday of the month, 7:00 PM, Maryland office

Adopted Persons' Discussion Group – 3rd Thursday of the month, 7:30 PM, Maryland office

Barker accepts donations made through CFC (38308) and United Way of Central Maryland (2542). Please send a copy of your completed pledge form to Barker's MD office, so that we can recognize your gift. Thank you!

THE
BARKER
ADOPTION
FOUNDATION SINCE 1945

7979 Old Georgetown Road
First Floor
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-664-9664
www.barkeradoptionfoundation.org

**non-profit
indicia to be
added**