

History of the Tony Winsor Award

Attorney Tony Winsor worked for Massachusetts Law Reform Institute and dedicated his 39 years of practice to advocating for the disadvantaged. Attorney Winsor worked endlessly on many cases and battles, but the battle most near and dear to medical interpreters was leading the task of passing the Massachusetts Emergency Room Bill signed into law as Chapter 66 of the Acts of 2000. The law states that all hospitals which provide acute care in emergency rooms or in acute psychiatric services must use competent interpreter services when treating non-English speaking patients. The passing of Chapter 66 of the Acts of 2000 was the forward thrust to professionalize medical interpreters and ultimately allowing disadvantaged patients to have a voice and seek quality care.

MassAHEC Network established the award for medical interpreters in Tony Winsor's name in 2015. The purpose of this award is to honor a person who, like Tony Winsor, has advocated for professionalizing the work of a medical interpreter to improve language access for all persons. The contributions to the field of medical interpreting may include advocating for the utilization of medical interpreters, providing education for medical interpreters, or promoting the work of medical interpreters.



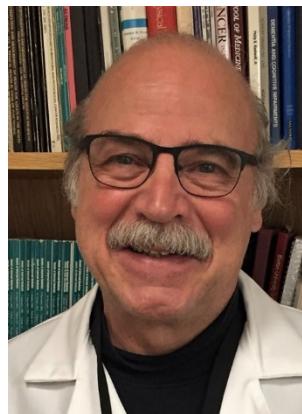
Massachusetts Medical Interpreter Training

Helping bridge communication barriers faced by patients accessing health care services.

Paving the Way to Health Care Access: Two Days of Learning for Interpreters

Tony Winsor Award Recipient for 2021 is Eric J. Hardt, MD

Words from Committee:



Eric Hardt was Tony Winsor's long-time "partner in crime" in language access work. At Tony's request, Eric conducted research on the cost and value of medical interpreters, and together they used this research to pass Massachusetts' first bill requiring medical interpreters in emergency rooms and psychiatric units. Testifying on the Mass State House using that data to support the legislation is among Eric's proudest professional moments, and one

of many along a long, illustrious career of championing language access. Eric is not an interpreter, but an M.D., and a monolingual one at that. Yet advocacy and training for medical interpreters has always been the most important aspect of his academic, political, and intellectual work, at least since 1985.

Our work at Found in Translation is in strengthening the medical interpreter workforce by paving a path for candidates with high talent but low economic resources to enter the profession—a profession that might look very different today if not for Eric Hardt. I first learned of Eric as the author of critical research, some of the first of its kind, showing the financial costs and clinical consequences of language barriers, and demonstrating the difference in error rate between ad hoc and professional interpreters. Eric used his position to give recognition and credibility to the medical interpreting field, which was instrumental to the passage of state laws, institution-level policies, and culture change. Without his contributions, relentlessly over decades, many more LEP patients would still be relying on their children or the receptionist for interpretation today. And many interpreters would not have a job market to support them—including those we train at Found in Translation. We, like much of the field, exist in part thanks to Eric's legacy, and we are grateful and proud to have him serving on our board of directors.

Past Awardees

2020 - Oscar Arocha-Pietri, MM

2019 – Vonessa Costa, Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA)

2018 – Joy Connell, DMH Interpreter Services

2017 – Estela McDonough, UMass Memorial

2016 – Jane Kontrimas, Beth Israel Hospital



I did not know Tony Windsor personally, but from what I know of Tony, his work and his legacy, I believe that if he were alive today, Eric would be the person he would nominate for this award. Also, Oscar Arocha-Pietri, who sadly passed away last year, wrote a strong endorsement prior to his passing for Eric's nomination for the Tony Windsor Award.