

RAIN (Regional AIDS Interfaith Network)



Reverend Deborah C. Warren *Founder, President & CEO*

An ordained Baptist minister, Rev. Warren founded RAIN in 1992 and has led the organization as President and CEO for 20 years.

She received her Masters of Arts from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, and Clinical Pastoral Education at Carolinas Medical Center.

In a time where sociologists fear the loss of community, RAIN has been able to draw together people from all denominations, ethnic groups, and political parties into a common mission of caring for those most often marginalized. More than 5,000 trained volunteers from 20 denominations across the Charlotte Mecklenburg region have “adopted” one or more HIV positive individuals. The experience of working on a team and learning to care for and value those persons has bridged boundaries of class, race, and sexual orientation.

The transformation that Debbie envisioned 22 years ago impacts not only the individual, but also the broader community. Her leadership is the catalyst and a continuing stimulus for work that has led thousands of others to care.

Included in a published portrait collection by fine art photographer/artist Frederica Merck, *For the Greater Good Women in the 21st Century—Portraits of Women Whose Lives are Largely Defined by Helping Others*, Debbie joins other notable leaders in work that honors the individual and enriches the community. She has appeared on national and statewide television to talk about her work uniting resources of the faith community in addressing the growing needs of both people infected with HIV/AIDS and their loved ones. Her model continues to break down the stigma surrounding those affected by this disease, in many cases replacing judgment with compassion.

Numerous service and leadership accomplishments include:

2012 Human Rights Campaign Carolinas *Legacy Award*

2010 Joined experts on HIV/AIDS at *The White House* as part of a dialogue on the role of public-private partnerships in the National HIV/AIDS Strategy

- Met with legislators in Washington and Raleigh to urge them to enact laws that help those with HIV/AIDS get the support and help they need
- Founding member and steering committee member of NCAAN (NC AIDS Action Network)
- Spoke on CBS Evening News and UNC-TV

2008 *Don King Community Service Award* – Charlotte Business Guild

2006 Bank of America *Local Hero Award*

2004 Leadership Charlotte *Unsung Hero Award*

2002 Ford Foundation *Leadership for a Changing World Award*

- Jim Oehler *Community Service Award*
- Taught multiple years at *U.S. Conference on AIDS*