



**SPIRIT OF SAGINAW AWARD**  
Nomination Form

*Nominee*

Name: Terry Pruitt

Company: NAACP Saginaw Branch

Address: 515 N. Washington Ave -- Suite #400

City: Saginaw State: MI ZIP: 48607

Phone: (989) 992-1816 (Cell) Email: tpruitt221@aol.com

*Nominator*

Name: Carolyn Pruitt

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 1469 Allendale Drive

City: Saginaw State: MI ZIP: 48638

Phone: (989) 792-1511 Email: cpruitt102@aol.com

**About the Nominee:**

On a separate sheet, please answer the following questions. Attach support documentation or additional information as needed:

1. Describe the event(s) or activity the nominee was involved in during the past 18 months that led to this nomination. Please be specific as to actual contribution/work involved.
2. Please list leadership positions, awards or recognition received by the nominee during the past 18 months that you deem relevant to the nomination.

**Supporting Documents:**

Please contact 1-2 individuals to supply supporting documentation to accompany your nomination form. Support documents can take the form of letters, emails, news articles, etc.

**Submission:**

Return completed nominations by May 31, 2020 to  
Lisa Dobbins, Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce  
515 N. Washington Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Saginaw, MI 48607  
or by email to [lisa@saginawchamber.org](mailto:lisa@saginawchamber.org)

**SAGINAW COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
**SPIRIT OF SAGINAW AWARD NOMINATION**  
Submitted by Carolyn Pruitt

**About the Nominee: Terry Pruitt**

I am placing Mr. Terry Pruitt in nomination for the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce 2020 Spirit of Saginaw Award. I've been married to him for 49 years and personally witnessed his continuous commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of life for individuals throughout the region.

Terry is a credible well-recognized civic leader throughout the Saginaw Community. I want to point out that his volunteer endeavors over the past couple of years are indicative of who he is and are just a continuation of what many in the community have seen from him for five decades. I was quite surprised in 1997 when Governor John Engler reached out to him to serve as the interim Executive Director of the Michigan Community Service commission, the state's lead volunteerism agency. He served in this role for nearly a year after having served as vice-chair of the state commission for several years. He is the recipient of numerous community service and volunteerism awards over the years. These include the Governor's Community Service Award, the Dow Corning Amy Houghton Community Service Award, the Second National Bank Service Award, and the Martin Luther King Service Award, just to name a few. In all candor he has never been about collecting awards as the motivation for giving of his time or talent to assist others. He genuinely believes in doing what he can to make things better for others.

The information below summarizes several of his specific volunteer engagements over the past two years that I feel strongly merit his consideration as the Chamber's 2020 Spirit of Saginaw Awardee:

**NAACP ENGAGEMENT**

- Terry successfully took over the leadership reins of the NAACP Branch in January of 2019 after having served as the organization's 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President for 10 years under the leadership of Mrs. Leola Wilson. In the intervening year and a half, he has upheld the organization mission by publicly advocating for employment fairness and equity, improved healthcare options for local residents, and economic parity for all citizens. These major positions were detailed in major community addresses in January of 2019 and 2020 presented by Mr. Pruitt.
- Terry served as the principal organizer of the 2019 NAACP State Convention hosted locally in September 2019. His efforts included securing a facility to host 250 attendees from branches around the state, structuring a Friday evening community event, recruiting local performing talent and speaker, and he also served as the caterer for the event.
- He is the principal architect of the 100 Year Centennial Video unveiled at the September 2019 Freedom Fund Program attended by more than 600 individuals from throughout the community and from around the State of Michigan including Governor Whitmer and United States Senator Stabenow. This video depicted the work of the Saginaw Branch of the NAACP for the ten decades of its existence in Saginaw County. It was the culmination of nearly 6 months of research, script writing and supervising the final production of the video. The video was well-received throughout the community with copies being made available to local school districts, public officials, and the Castle Museum.
- Throughout the spring and summer of 2019, Terry served as part of a local taskforce to Raise the Age of minors (17 and under) in Michigan who were being placed in adult prisons to complete their court-ordered sentencing. This was a priority for the State NAACP branches in partnership with the ACLU and other organizations. The work of the local taskforce included securing



eligible signatures on petitions, making presentations to various audiences in the area, contacting local legislative representatives and other government officials to request that they address the issue. The effort was successful in that the legislature and Governor Whitmer in October of 2019 approved legislation directing that 17-year-olds will no longer be automatically treated as adults in Michigan's criminal justice system.

### **2020 Census Volunteer Efforts**

- In July of 2019 Terry accepted a request to serve on the Saginaw County 2020 Census Complete Count Committee in the capacity of Co-Chair of the African-American Outreach Committee. He led an effort along with various community partners that included the design and implementation a plan to educate and encourage participation in the 2020 Census within the African-American Community. He authored a grant that was subsequently approved by the Saginaw Community Foundation to undertake the outreach program that included a direct mailing to 5,000 households in targeted high probability undercount neighborhoods in the City of Saginaw and Buena Vista Charter Township in March 2020. In addition, an appeal letter and educational flyer authored by Terry was sent to more than 90 African-American clergy leaders requesting their assistance in addressing the need to complete the 2020 Census questionnaire to their congregations.
- In April 2020 he worked with Lamar Advertising in the design and location of billboards dedicated to promoting the completion of the 2020 Census questionnaire.
- In the first five months of 2020 he worked extensively with Alpha Media to produce a between 100 and 200 monthly radio commercials for WTLZ KISS 107.1, the radio station that targets the African-American Community, encouraging listeners to complete the 2020 Census Questionnaire. Terry authored the scripts for the radio announcements and the on-air voice for the announcements. In April 2020 he participated in a one-on-one interview on the Art Lewis radio program highlighting the importance for all citizens to participate in the 2020 Census.
- In March of 2020 Terry made a direct appeal to the Saginaw City Council to formally declare April 1, 2020 as County Day in the City of Saginaw. He subsequently worked with the Mayor and the City Manager's Office in the drafting of the formal proclamation that was approved by the council.
- Terry in the past year has participated in nearly a dozen panel discussions and presentations to various community groups and organizations including a special regional town hall virtual broadcast with Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist. These efforts were aimed at educating the public about the need to participate in the 2020 Census.

### **CORONAVIRUS EFFORTS**

- In March of this year Terry joined the local coordinating effort to identify emergency assistance needs impacting county residents resulting from the Covid-19 virus. He's been an active participant in weekly virtual meetings of the coordinating group developing ways to respond to emergency assistance needs of individuals throughout the area. He has served as a lead voice in encouraging the coordinating group and local healthcare officials to monitor the impact the virus is having on people of color.
- Mr. Pruitt assisted in coordinating two one-hour long radio broadcasts in April 2020 that provided important information to the minority community about the pandemic and how it impacts different ethnic groups. The broadcasts were aired on KISS 107.1 and were highly rated. The first broadcast featured Dr. Delicia Pruitt, Medical Director for the Saginaw County Health Department and Dr. Roslyn McQueen, a long-time medical researcher with Hurley

Hospital. The interview provided critical information about the virus, testing options, and the reasons why African-Americans and other minorities are likely to be more severely impacted by this type of virus. The second broadcast featured an interview with Sarah Kile, Director of the local 211 Program. She was able to discuss the services and assistance available to residents from 211. This provided an opportunity for Ms. Kile to have direct access to a major constituency group with a likely need for 211 assistance.

- Terry continues to publicly advocate for compliance with directives and regulations from health professionals and various government officials to contain the fallout from the virus. In April and May he participated in a series of virtual webinars/townhall discussions underscoring the need for caution in our efforts to protect ourselves currently from the virus as well as going forward.

### **OTHER AREAS OF INVOLVEMENT**

There are numerous other recent involvements that Terry has engaged in that further confirm his commitment to improving the quality of life for Saginaw residents. Information here highlight several of these endeavors.

- Throughout 2019 and the first half of 2020 Terry participated in a series of facilitated discussion sessions with Saginaw Public School District Board Members and administrative leaders with the purpose of developing a new strategic plan for the district. He was a consistent voice advocating for improved academic performance and improving facilities and equipment to meet the needs of students and make the district more competitive.
- He continues his service on the Saginaw County Youth Protection Council Board of Directors where he has served for more than 40 years. In 2019 he led the Board's effort to evaluate the job performance of the agency's executive director.
- Terry has served as the Financial Chair for the Boy Scouts of America Michigan Crossroads Council Water and Woods Field Service Council. Over the past two years he has led the annual Whitney M. Young Service Award Program which has raised more than \$25,000 to support local scouting efforts in the area. He has also supported efforts to encourage recruitment and participation of minority youth in scouting.
- In February Terry participated in the annual Martin Luther King March in downtown Saginaw. He served as the keynote speaker at the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church Annual Black History Program. In addition, he accepted an invitation from Central Michigan University to serve as the guest presenter for their Heritage Month Program discussion where he addressed the importance of voting rights and the role and relevance of political parties in 2020.
- Terry serves on the Board of Directors for the Power of Dad Organization where he assists in fundraising efforts and provides mentoring assistance to the young men in the program and strategic support to Brian Pruitt, the Founder and CEO of the program.

Please see the attached letters supporting this nomination from, Joyce Seals, former Mayor of the City of Saginaw, Mary Ellen Johnson, President & CEO Saginaw Youth Protection Council, and Eric Curtis, Development Director, Michigan Crossroads Council, Boy Scouts of America.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carolyn Pruitt

Attachments





# **The New Christ Community Church**

**3302 Grant Street ~ Saginaw, Michigan 48601**

**Reverend Eugene O. Seals, Pastor**

**(989) 755-3357**



May 21, 2020

To Saginaw Chamber Spirit of Saginaw Award Committee:

I'm deeply honored to support the nomination of Mr. Terry Pruitt for the 2020 Spirit of Saginaw Award. In the sixty years that I've known Mr. Pruitt he has been a model of volunteerism and a committed champion of Saginaw. I've personally worked on a number of projects alongside him and he's always demonstrated thoughtful leadership, fairness and a belief that the community of Saginaw has the ability to overcome any problem through unified and diverse effort.

Mr. Pruitt has been a part of many local initiatives and organizations that clearly establish his support for this community. These include serving as a charter member of the board of trustees for the Saginaw Community Foundation, former member of the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, former member of the Saginaw County United Way Board of Directors, a member of the Saginaw County Youth Protection Board of Directors, and the Ezekiel Project.

He is also a major leader at our church and has led several efforts to engage the church in important community causes. Among his most recent endeavors, he served as the lead representative from the church to work with city leaders and representatives of the Southside Neighborhood Association to provide input for re-development of the Wickes Park Recreational site, which is located two blocks from our church on the southside of Saginaw. He worked side by side with my husband, Pastor Eugene Seals to gain certification as mentors in support of the State of Michigan's Prisoner Re-Entry Program. In my role as a school board member, in the past year I reached out to him to participate in a series of community panels to assist in the development of the Saginaw Public School District's new strategic plan. He proved to be an important contributor to this effort.

In my view, Terry Pruitt totally exemplifies the thrust of the Chamber's Spirit of Saginaw Award. As the former mayor of Saginaw and close associate of Mr. Pruitt, I know firsthand about his service and commitment to this community. He is a mentor, a servant, insightful and respected leader in our community. He has never failed to respond to my call for assistance whenever I've reached out to him. I'm positive that there are many others in the area who can attest to my personal testimony.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this nomination. I encourage you to give positive consideration of Mr. Pruitt's nomination for this year's award.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joyce Seals, Co-Pastor

**YOUTH**  
**PROTECTION**  
**COUNCIL**

1226 N. Michigan Ave. Saginaw, MI 48602 (989) 755-0937 [www.yppccares.org](http://www.yppccares.org)

May 26, 2020

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Steve Hocquard

Peggy Maine

Linda Sims

Mary Ellen Johnson  
President/CEO

Ms. Lisa Dobbins  
Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce  
515 N. Washington Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Saginaw, Michigan 48607

Re: Terry Pruitt, Spirit of Saginaw Award

Dear Ms. Dobbins:

I am writing to support the nomination of Mr. Terry Pruitt for the Spirit of Saginaw Award. Mr. Pruitt has been on the Board of Directors of the Saginaw County Youth Protection Council for 40 years. We serve runaway and homeless youth, teen and young parents, and teach school-age kids about the dangers of drugs and build resiliency skills.

Terry serves our agency well through his integrity and steadfast advice on managing both successes and challenges. Mr. Pruitt is a thoughtful listener, encourage dialogue among the board members and then providing sound strategies on how to proceed. Terry knows Saginaw, our schools, businesses, and neighborhoods. Mr. Pruitt has dedicated decades of his life to ensuring Saginaw's most vulnerable families and children are protected and given their rightful opportunity to thrive.

Terry's commitment to Saginaw is exceptional, and very worthy of recognition through the Spirit of Saginaw award. Mr. Pruitt has also exemplified commitment to Saginaw through his leadership with the NAACP and countless other non-profit organizations. If there is a group of community leaders meeting on key issues you can be sure that Terry Pruitt will be involved.

Thank you for the opportunity to support the nomination of Terry Pruitt for the Spirit of Saginaw Award.

Kindest Regards,



Mary Ellen Johnson  
President/CEO





**BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®**  
MICHIGAN CROSSROADS COUNCIL  
WATER AND WOODS FIELD SERVICE COUNCIL

May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020

To the Spirit of Saginaw Selection Committee,

My name is Eric Curtis and I am the Development Director for the Boy Scouts of America, serving the Great Lakes Bay Region. Is it a privilege to share in the nomination of Mr. Terry Pruitt for the 2020 Spirit of Saginaw award. I have had the honor to work with Mr. Pruitt on a variety of initiatives through the Scouting movement.

Our work together began with a partnership between the Boy Scouts of America and his efforts leading the Centric Program. Our partnership delivered the values founded in the Scout Oath and Law, couple with our STEM initiative called the NOVA Award. We served middle school aged boys at Thompson Middle School for much of the second half of the school year, directly after school.

After that partnership Mr. Pruitt joined our local Scout board as the chair of our finance board. Since then he has been lead the initiative to start an annual Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award Dinner, which in two years has raised nearly \$25,000 to support our Saginaw Scoutreach program. Scoutreach serves 1,600 underserved youth in the city of Saginaw, and thanks to Mr. Pruitt's leadership we have been able to hire additional part time program aids to provide our program, and grow the number of sites we can work with. In addition, due to the fundraising success of the team Mr. Pruitt has built, we are now able to plan a summer camp exclusive to inner city youth, and hope to launch in summer 2021.

Mr. Pruitt exemplifies the spirit of Saginaw by giving of his time, treasure, and talents to many organizations, and has a passion for those specifically serving youth. He has been a blessing for the local Scouting movement, and in impacting the lives of thousands of underserved youth in the city of Saginaw. His efforts in building a sustainable fundraising plan will have a lasting contribution to our movement. On top of that he has personally been a mentor and friend, and has been a profound part of my professional and personal development. He will make a proud addition to the distinguished list of past Spirit of Saginaw recipients.

Thank you for your consideration,

Eric Curtis  
Development Director  
Michigan Crossroads Council, Boy Scouts of America

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4205 E. Court St.  
Burton, MI 48509-1719  
Phone: 810-235-2531

Lansing Service Center  
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[www.michiganscouting.org](http://www.michiganscouting.org)

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