

Marge Byington – Potter Biography

Marge Byington, whose Grand Rapids roots are seven generations deep, has achieved statewide and regional impact through business and public policy activities. She served for 10 years on the Kent County Board of Commissioners, including two as its first female chair.

In Lansing, she was chief deputy director of the Michigan Department of Commerce from 1991-93, providing a strong West Michigan connection to the major government department dealing with companies of all sizes. The next government position took her to Detroit as an economic development adviser to Mayor Dennis Archer in the mid-1990s.

In the private sector, Marge and a development partner generated hundreds of jobs in a Renaissance Zone of Detroit through revitalization of vacant industrial sites, now used by three automotive suppliers. She's currently working to elevate Michigan's international transportation importance as a top executive of the Detroit International Tunnel Partnership, which plans to build a higher-capacity freight rail link to Canada. In our region, wide-ranging community service roles include membership on a Grand Rapids Public Schools advisory committee helping plan several Centers of Innovation and current board positions at the Progressive Women's Alliance. She is an active supporter of the Girls Choral Academy, and Muskegon Museum of Art, Spectrum Hospital Foundation and Grand Valley State University Foundation. Marge and husband Paul Potter last year endowed an annual Grand Valley State University scholarship for a GRPS graduate.

Recently, in 2008, Marge was awarded the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce's 2008 ATHENA Award recipient. In February 2010, Marge was honored by the Grand Rapids Business Journal as one of "The 50 Most Influential Women in West Michigan." and then in April 2010 she was honored by the Michigan Women's Foundation as a Women Of Achievement And Courage. She is an avid gardener, reader, traveler, cook and environmental activist.