This year’s TODOS Iris M. Carl Leadership and Equity Award winner has been a champion for equity in education promoting excellence in mathematics education for all students even before TODOS was created. Her extensive efforts to help underserved students reach across several countries. She knows first-hand the role that language and culture play in the teaching and learning of mathematics for all students. Her personal background as a member of the Métis peoples, as a former secondary teacher and coordinator, and as a researcher in Africa, inform her perspectives in engaging prospective teachers to become aware of and to move beyond that awareness regarding the importance of culture and language in teaching children.

She was born and raised in rural communities in Northeastern Alberta strongly connected to her Métis family who supported and encouraged her education. She attended schools where there were many Native American youth, children in foster care, and children of Arabic, Eastern and Western European descent. Her wisdom has been shaped by her diverse experiences with students and teachers.

She has led sustained initiatives to improve the quality of mathematics education and success for all students from working in Native American communities; to working with urban Native American youth; and now working in rural and remote communities of Tanzania.

She is recognized internationally for her research and is in demand as a speaker. She has made significant contributions in the area of access to high quality mathematics for all students thus making a significant impact on the lives of and promoting high quality mathematics education for all students. She is a respected leader to whom others turn for information.

One key snapshot of her leadership expertise and tenacity was her service as Program Chair of the NCTM Annual Meeting and Exposition in Salt Lake City (2008). The planning for NCTM’s annual meeting is a ‘two year seemingly 24/7 ordeal’ and the then NCTM President Francis (Skip) Fennell wanted to make sure all of the planning was in able hands. Dr. Fennell notes that “not only was this a successful conference overall with hundreds of sessions, but in featuring Canadian-born Malcolm Gladwell, who treated the large opening keynote audience to a preview of the now wildly popular and acclaimed Outliers, and also having Native American and Olympic hero Billy Mills close the session, our awardee ensured that the meeting began and closed with important equity-related considerations. This leadership snapshot is one more testimony of her ability to work with others, collaborate, meet deadlines, and both achieve and surpass projected goals.”

In addition to her commitment to underserved students our awardee’s leadership skills and commitment seem to be part of her DNA. She leads by example in practice and professional achievement. She leads her department as a transformational chair, teaches courses while keeping up with current research, serves as an active TODOS Director and Conferences Committee Chair, serves on the NCTM Board of Directors (as the elected Canadian representative) and as NCTM Board liaison to the Affiliate Services Committee, leads her grant projects, publishes professional papers, speaks at conferences, provides professional development opportunities to teachers, works directly with students, keeps up with the use of technology in education, is active in her church, and manages to have time to play bridge!

She listens carefully to discussions and asks pertinent questions for clarification with tact and grace and, when helpful, with humor. Often her questions lead to changes in wording in a document or a statement. She is able to synthesize information from diverse sources into a coherent whole. She navigates through a great deal of discussion to get to the heart of the matter at hand. She is flexible and can adapt to unforeseen situations with aplomb. She is chairing the NCTM Task Force to assess the feasibility of implementing the TODOS resolution to publish electronic NCTM materials to be used by students in both English and Spanish. She treats everyone equitably and with respect and is a respected leader.

An unsolicited message from one of the members of the 2008 NCTM Salt Lake City Program Committee who is also a TODOS member sums things up: “I think she is wonderful. I met her when you recommended me to her for the planning committee of an NCTM conference…. I don't know her very well, but I was impressed at the time of the wide range of knowledge she has. Not many people have that. She has a very deep knowledge of student learning (and content) from early childhood through high school. This is not very common (in my experience). Of course, she also knows a lot about teacher preparation, prof. development, etc. In addition, of course, she has great personality traits. She is very professional …, she's calm, friendly but assertive and gets things done!”

Given this combination of passion, commitment and action regarding high quality and success in mathematics education for all students and her proven leadership contributions, Dr. Florence Anne Glanfield is, indeed, an inspiration to all who embrace equity. And on behalf of TODOS I am pleased to present this award to her.