

Rachel Bussard Tompkins

(Excerpts from Rachel B. Tompkins document posted on WVRIVERS.org in 2017)

Rachel Bussard Tompkins was born in Huntersville, WV June 1, 1944, the daughter of Rev Ellis Clyde and Reta Lutitia Rexrode Bussard. She is a graduate of Hinton High School, Class of 1961

Rachel earned her A.B. at West Virginia University, 1965 - Major fields of study were biology, chemistry, English literature. Graduated with highest honors. Member of Phi Beta Kappa. Then her M.P.A. from Syracuse University, 1968 - Major field of study: Public Administration. Degree awarded with distinction. Culminating with an Ed.D. from Harvard University, 1975 - Major area of study: administration, planning and policy analysis.

Rachel spent her professional career working on issues of education, youth development, and community economic development. She began her career as a 4-H Agent and served in several other positions at West Virginia University (WVU): Area Extension Program Leader, Vice Provost for Extension and Economic Development, and Professor of Community Economic Development. For many years she served on the Board of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) and for three years was Executive Director of CDF. She was the founding President of the Rural School and Community Trust and retired from that position in 2009. During her years at WVU, she began the Energy Express Program, and expanded the sustainable agriculture, direct marketing and local foods programs. On loan to WV Governor Gaston Caperton, she began the national service program, now called Volunteer WV.

She has served on many boards, including the Annenberg Rural Challenge, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, the Edward W. Hazen Foundation, Rural Technology Systems, Board of Advisors of Concord College, and the WV Rivers Coalition. Most recently, she chaired the Board of Allegheny Mountain Radio on which she served for six years.

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Rachel's impressive professional background includes –

1965-1967 - 4H-Agent, Harrison County Organized 4-H youth development program in a county of 50,000.

1968-1970 - Area Program Chair, West Virginia University Appalachian Center. Program assistance to county extension agents on educational programs for young people and adults. Implemented a federally funded nutrition education program, which included managing the hiring and training of paraprofessionals. Implemented a computer-based management and reporting system. Organized and conducted staff training programs.

1970 - Assistant to Vice-President, Off-Campus Education, and Assistant Professor of Political Science, West Virginia University Policy analysis and program development for university off campus programs.

1971 - Research Assistant, Center for Educational Policy Research, Harvard. Assisted in preparation of evaluation of Title I ESEA programs. Developed and taught a course on "The Effects of Schooling" with four others.

1972 - Teaching Assistant, Harvard. Developed and taught, with two other faculty members, a course in university planning using the case study method.

1972-1974 - Staff Associate, University of Massachusetts, President's Office Policy analysis on issues of student financial aid, admission of adult students, continuing education and community services. Organized an educational release program for prisoners in state institutions. Represented the University on various state and regional groups concerned with continuing education and adult programs and regional planning.

1975-1976 - Consultant, National Institute of Education, Research Project in Rural Education. Prepared two papers on rural school organization and finance.

1975-1976 - Associate Director, Citizen's Council for Ohio Schools. Responsible for Council research, writing and publication in areas of school desegregation, school attendance and school finance. Also engaged in building networks of citizens concerned about these particular education issues.

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1976-1982 - Director, Citizen's Council for Ohio Schools. Responsible for management of state-wide citizen organization representing business, labor, farm, civic leadership, with staff of eight and an annual budget of \$300,000. Responsible for raising annual budget from private and public sources. Supervised research, writing, technical assistance, and lobbying on desegregation, finance, exclusion, citizen participation, and vocational education.

1982-1984 - Executive Director, Children's Defense Fund Chief Operating Officer reporting to the President. CDF is a 60 person, \$3,000,000 a year, privately funded organization working to improve laws and policies affecting America's children. Responsible for all phases of management, including personnel, budget, development, program and strategy planning.

1984-1989 - Associate Vice-President for University Extension and Public Service and Director of Cooperative Extension Service; Director of the Institute for Public Affairs (1986-89); Associate Professor, Education Administration; West Virginia University. Responsible for leadership for all university extension and economic development activities. Supervised staff of 225 professionals, 85 paraprofessionals, 200 classified and secretarial staff, and 50 camp operations personnel at the State 4-H Conference Center. Oversaw a budget of \$13,000,000. Member of President's Cabinet.

1989-1994 - Associate Provost for Extension and Economic Development and Director of Cooperative Extension Service, West Virginia University; Extension Professor. Responsible for leadership for all university extension and economic development activities. Chair Council for Economic Development which recommends university policy and programs to President. Supervised staff of 200 professionals, 60 paraprofessionals, 200 classified and secretarial staff, and 50 operations personnel at State 4-H Conference Center. Oversaw a budget of \$18,000,000. Member of Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. Managed \$10 million grant program targeted to those communities. Founding chair of the WV Commission for National and Community Service.

1994-1996 - Advisor to Governor Gaston Caperton, Extension Professor Loaned by WVU to Governor's Office to implement community development program. Led Community First, a program focused on 15 communities, supported President's Cabinet.

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1996-1999 - Extension Professor, Community, Economic, and Workforce Development; Faculty Associate, Regional Research Institute; West Virginia University - Provided training and technical assistance for community capacity building. Conducted research on social capital. Nurtured new community based networks and organizations.

1999-2009 - President, Rural School and Community Trust, Chief Executive Officer of the premier national non-profit organization working to help rural schools and communities get better together

Major awards include the Star Award from Allegheny Mountain Radio and Lifetime Achievement from the Rural Sociology Society.

She lives on her ancestral farm in Pocahontas County, WV.

Rachel Bussard Tompkins, We Salute You!

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