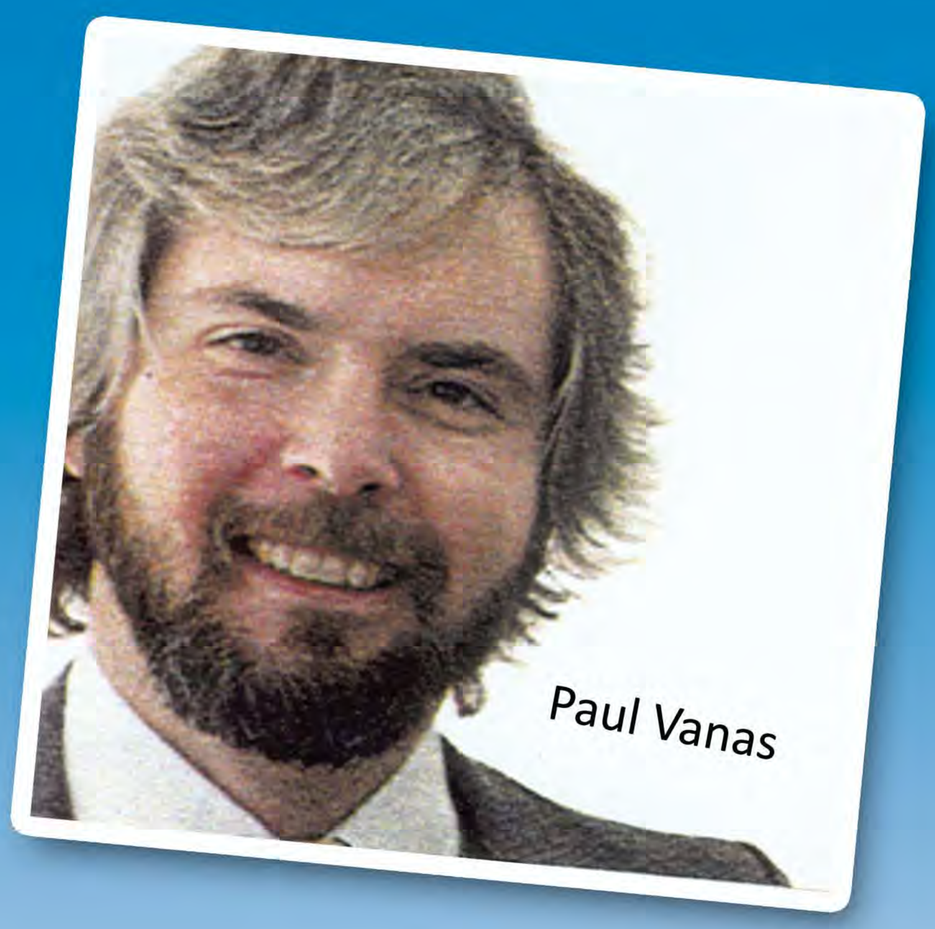

Paul D. Vanas Memorial Service Award

This award is named after Paul Vanas, a New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) employee who until his death played a pivotal role in developing services for the aged. As an outgrowth of his work on Adult Day Care Paul became a founding member of the Third Age Committee, representing NYSOFA and joining before the name of the committee became officially the "Third Age." Paul was a true leader in his field and a true friend to all aging services advocates. This award was established in 1994 to recognize the special contributions of those individuals who exemplify this same spirit of advocacy and dedication. The Third Age Committee recognizes those who provide service opportunities and enhance services and supports for older adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The award was expanded to include individuals with an intellectual and/or developmental disability.

Paul Dana Vanas was an inspiration as an advocate for residents living in long term care facilities. As an Ombudsman he protected the health, safety and rights of the residents. As an advocate, Paul met the challenge of being an Ombudsman by improving the lives of nursing home and adult home residents, one resident at a time. Each person was special.

Paul Vanas' association with the Ombudsman program began in 1977 as the director of the Monroe County Ombudsman Program. In February, 1981, he joined the NYSOFA Long Term Care Ombudsman Program and became the Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman for the Rochester area. In 1984 Paul moved to Albany and became the Assistant Director for the State Ombudsman Program and in that capacity worked to develop policy and standards for state program operations. At this time he also became the Regional Ombudsman for the Capital District and Hudson Valley areas.

Paul left the Ombudsman program in 1985 to assume duties as an Aging Services Program Analyst, which included initiatives in the area of Adult Day Care. He wrote the statewide regulations for social adult day care and also did breakthrough work in the area of quality assurance for in-home services for the elderly. Paul also helped develop the assessment system for NYSOFA's homecare programs and trained hundreds of case managers who went on to assist elders and their families.

Paul served on many committees that championed the cause of the elderly and mentally ill. He served as a member, a former vice-president, a committee chair and was on the board of directors for the Mental Health Needs of the Elderly of the Mental Health Chapter, and the Health Association of Rochester and Monroe County from May 1978 to September 1984.

Third Age Committee
"Focusing on issues for aging persons with developmental disabilities"