



William E. Milliken: A 45-Year Commitment to Children

Bill Milliken, founder and vice chairman of Communities In Schools, Inc., is one of the nation's foremost pioneers in the movement to give young people the help they need to graduate from high school and go on to rewarding careers.

The year 2000 marked the 40th anniversary of Milliken's commitment to children, and saw him receive two major national awards. The Edward A. Smith Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership honors one executive each year who exemplifies "extraordinary leadership" over a lifetime of service. The "Champion for Children" award from the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) honors a nationally known non-educator whose contributions have significantly and positively influenced the lives of children.

Communities In Schools is the nation's leading community-based organization helping kids stay in school and prepare for life. CIS currently provides access to services for 2 million students and their families each year in nearly 3,000 schools in 28 states. Its grass-roots, personalized approach embodies Milliken's long-held philosophy, "Programs don't change children – relationships do."

Milliken's activism began in 1960 when he joined Young Life, an ecumenical youth organization. He helped initiate "street academies" for young people who had dropped out of school and wanted a chance to resume their education, as well as live-in programs for substance abusers and youth in need of shelter and support. Milliken's experiences led him to search for a comprehensive approach to helping young people. This search culminated in the 1970s with the development of a model program that repositioned existing community resources into schools — the Communities In Schools program, which Milliken led as president until May 2004.

Milliken has served three U.S. presidents. During the Carter Administration, he was the White House Advisor on Youth Issues. In 1989, Milliken advised President Bush for the Education Summit with the nation's governors. Most recently, Milliken was involved in the planning of The Presidents' Summit for America's Future. In 1994, Milliken received the National Caring Award as one of the "10 most caring people in America." In 1992, he received the Temple Award for Creative Altruism, given by the Institute of Noetic Sciences, which honors individuals "whose lives and work demonstrate the transformative power of caring coupled with imagination and enterprise."

Milliken serves on the board of Leadership Foundations of America. He is the author of two books, *So Long, Sweet Jesus*, and *Tough Love*.