

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) Honors Milestones
Board Member and Music Therapist Ronna Kaplan with its Lifetime
Achievement Award**



SILVER SPRING, M.D. December 14, 2020 – Ronna Kaplan, MA, MT-BC, was honored with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award of the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) at the organization’s recent virtual annual conference. An honors graduate of Michigan State (B Mus, Music Therapy & Choral Music Education) and Kent State Universities (MA, Special Education), Ronna has dedicated her life to music therapy.

Ronna has had a long, admirable music therapy career focused on her clients’ needs and service. Having held a variety of prior clinical and educational music therapy positions in northeast Ohio, in 1988, she joined the faculty of The Music Settlement, where she remained until her retirement in 2019. In addition to her music therapy direct service and research, she held several management positions, most notably Chair of The Music Settlement’s Center for Music Therapy for 15 years and Interim Co-Executive Director of The Music Settlement and Acting Director of its Center for Music. Ronna presently is a Clinical Supervisor/Adjunct Music Therapy Faculty member at Cleveland State University.

Ronna’s volunteerism for music therapy is as phenomenal as her employment history. After holding numerous leadership positions at state and regional levels, Ronna co-founded the AMTA Early Childhood Music Therapy Network and served on the Assembly of Delegates. She served on the AMTA Board of Directors for ten years in the capacities of Vice President Elect, Vice President, President Elect, President and Past President. Ronna also contributed to AMTA in a wide array of other capacities including its Diversity Task Force and Autism Task Force, as well as serving on the Certification Board for Music Therapists’ Continuing Education Committee. She recently completed a term as Chair of the National Coalition of Creative Arts Therapies Associations (NCCATA). Currently Ronna functions as an Associate Editor of the AMTA journal *Music Therapy Perspectives* and Music Therapy Scholarship chair for the Ohio Federation of Music Clubs. Ronna presents and publishes extensively and has written music therapy columns for the *Huffington Post*.

A fervent advocate for rights and access for those with disabilities or other disparities, Ronna’s nominators from the AMTA Board of Directors commented that “...despite this extensive resume of accomplishments and service, what truly sets Ronna apart and worthy of a Lifetime Achievement Award is the person she is: always humble, ever available to whomever needs her assistance, all while possessing the utmost integrity. She continually supports those around her and, in doing so, allows them to shine... Ronna is truly a music therapist’s music therapist.”

In her acceptance remarks, Ronna expressed, “I am deeply honored and extremely humbled to be recognized by my colleagues and friends with this extraordinary award! The award is especially meaningful at this time of limited personal connectivity.” She also shared, “My personal ‘why’ very closely aligns with my professional ‘why’--using my skills, passion and

compassion to make a positive impact in the lives of others.” She acknowledged many of her “influencers,” mentors, and colleagues, crediting Robert Bergantino, former Cleveland Heights High School band director, for introducing her to the field of music therapy and thanking her parents for instilling in her their essential values of philanthropy and service. She dedicated the award to the myriad students, interns and staff members she trained and supervised, while they in turn taught her so much, and, most of all, to the countless clients and families who generously shared their music and journeys with her and allowed her into their lives. In closing, she stated, “People may say I have touched countless lives in my career but I like to think of it as this: Countless people and families have touched *my* life and I am forever changed and all the richer for it!”