

**National Community Land Trust Network**  
**Swann-Matthei Memorial Award**  
**Presented to**  
**Mtaminika Youngblood**  
October 2011

The Swann-Matthei Memorial Award is named for two individuals who helped to lay the foundation for the development of community land trusts in the United States: Bob Swann and Chuck Matthei.

Bob Swann was a co-author of the first book to describe the basic features of the model of tenure that we know today as the community land trust. He was a co-founder of the Institute for Community Economics and the E.F. Schumacher Society, and he is credited with having put “community” into the community land trust. Inspired by the Gramdan movement in India and drawing on his personal experience in helping to create New Communities, Inc, an agricultural community for black homesteaders near Albany, Georgia, Bob was convinced that a CLT needed a base of support much broader than its own leaseholders to thrive. A CLT needed to be *of* a community, not just *in* it.

If it was Bob Swann’s vision that added community to the CLT model, it was Chuck Matthei’s energy and eloquence that seeded this community-based model in dozens of neighborhoods, cities, and towns. He gave prominence to the model’s application to the housing problems of the poor, while emphasizing the model’s potential for giving low-income communities long-term control over their own destiny. As executive director of the Institute for Community Economics and later the Equity Trust, Chuck spent most of his time on the road. Speaking to audiences far and wide, he shared inspiring stories of community land trusts, community-supported agriculture, and community loan funds transforming the lives of families left behind by both the market and the state.

The Swann-Matthei Award is a memorial to the conviction and commitment of these two remarkable men. It recognizes the outstanding contribution of an individual or organization in promoting the use of the community land trust in building and sustaining community.

It is my great honor to present this year’s award to Mtaminika Youngblood. As a young community organizer with the SNCC, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, she was at New Communities – the first community land trust that Bob Swann helped to establish in the late 1960s.

Mtaminika has been an organizer all her life, and along the way she has earned the respect, admiration and love of many. Some of her more recent roles include working as President and CEO of The Center for Working Families, as the Director of Neighborhood Transformation for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Atlanta Civic Site, and currently she is the President and CEO of Sustainable Neighborhood Development Strategies, Inc., an organization working to revitalize Atlanta's Pittsburg neighborhood, described as "ground zero" for the foreclosure crisis in Atlanta.

Mtaminika has been a mentor for many. Her deep listening, thoughtfulness and respect for all people is a hallmark of her character. She inspires those around her to do the very best that they can – and often to go further, and do more than they thought possible. She totally embraces community, bringing people in so that they understand all the issues, and making sure that their voice is heard – making sure that they know their voice is welcome, and that it is right and good for them to speak, to engage, to stand up for what is needed in their community.

Mtaminika lives in a 19<sup>th</sup> century historic house in Atlanta's Old Fourth Ward neighborhood that she, her husband, George, and family, renovated. I understand that without Mtaminika this area of Atlanta, known as the MLK Historic Area, would not have had the care that it has had – it would not look or feel or behave the way that it does. With Mtaminika, it's not just about the technical aspects of how things look at the end, it's about the process along the way – making sure that people are heard and respected and respectful.

For years, Mtaminika has worked to lift people up – to support and inspire them to participate in the civic life of their community. And through the years she kept a flame burning for the community land trust model. Through the past decade others have joined her so that now the Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative is working with Atlanta Beltline Partnership to foster community land trust activities in numerous neighborhoods around Atlanta.

Please join me in welcoming and thanking Mtaminika for never giving up, and for lifting people up to where they need to be.

----Lisa Byers