

# WOD Series: Karen Cooper uses talents to benefit community in numerous ways

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
April 28 2016 10:20 AM



*This is another in a series of stories recognizing this year's YWCA Women of Distinction.*

**ALTON - Karen Cooper**, Superintendent of Operations for Illinois American Water Co.'s Alton District, makes a huge purpose on improving the community she lives in, serving on a variety of boards and assisting countless organizations with her time.

Cooper is being honored as one of the **YWCA Women of Distinction**.

“Being a Woman of Distinction means I belong to part of a group that is bigger than myself,” she said. “It means I am part of a community where I can use my God-given talents. In fact, it is a responsibility to use those God-Given talents to make the River Bend a better place to live.”

Cooper is a trailblazer in her field and was the first woman to hold an environmental scientist position in the Ohio EPA Division of Public Drinking Water. She was the first woman director of Water Quality and the first woman superintendent of the water operation in the Alton area.

### **Community Involvement:**

Cooper is active in the RiverBend Growth Association, Rotary Club, director for Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Madison and St. Clair counties and is on both the Alton Symphony Board of Directors and the Saint Anthony’s Foundation Board of Directors.

She has co-sponsored the Jacoby Arts High School Art Contest, has been a Senior Services Plus volunteer, a contributor to the Oasis Women’s Center, is a MS Gateway Bike Ride volunteer, 5A’s Animal Shelter volunteer and a volunteer for “All God’s Children Shall Have Shoes.”

Professionally she is involved in water utility management, offers coaching to co-workers, and was nominated to Leadership Illinois, a non-profit organization dedicated to developing women in leadership positions.

She also has identified water treatment solutions for iron, manganese and arsenic removal.

*To recognize and celebrate the achievements of these Women of Distinction, the YWCA is hosting an evening event May 5, 2016 at the Commons of Lewis & Clark Community College. The event begins at 6 p.m. (doors open at 5:30) Dinner reservations are \$60 per person or \$480 for a table of eight. Reservations are available in person at the Alton YWCA located at 304 East 3RD Street, by phone (618) 465-7774 or online at [www.altonywca.com](http://www.altonywca.com). For additional information regarding this exciting event, visit [www.altonywca.com](http://www.altonywca.com)!*