



## Penny Sebring & Charles Lewis

Distinguished Philanthropists Award | 2025 Annual Philanthropy Awards

**Penny Bender Sebring** is a Senior Research Associate and Co-Founder of the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, now a principal component of the Kirsten Institute for Urban Education. Penny has contributed to numerous Consortium publications on school organization, leadership, and students' participation in digital media. She is a co-author of *How a City Learned to Improve Its Schools* (Harvard Education Press, 2023) and *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago* (University of Chicago Press, 2010). Penny graduated from Grinnell College and was a long-time member of its Board of Trustees. After Grinnell, she joined the Peace Corps and later became a high school teacher. She received a master's degree from the Pennsylvania State University, a PhD in Education and Policy Studies from Northwestern University, and an honorary doctorate from Grinnell. She is Vice-Chair of the Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation and serves on the Board of Directors for the Chicago Public Education Fund and Kids First Chicago. She previously was a member of the Policy Advisory Board of the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern.

Penny is married to Chuck Lewis, and they have three children and five grandchildren.

Penny and Chuck have jointly received awards from the Golden Apple Foundation; OneGoal; the McGaw YMCA; the Second Baptist Church of Evanston; and they received the Key to the City of Evanston.

**Charles Ashby Lewis** is Chair of the Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation. He was with Merrill Lynch & Co. for almost 35 years, ultimately as a Vice Chairman of Investment Banking. Chuck was educated at Amherst College and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. After graduating from Wharton, he served in the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps for 3 years, attaining the rank of captain. He received honorary degrees from Grinnell College and Amherst.

He is a Life Trustee of Amherst and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and is a member of the Board of Directors of Chicago Public Media. He is a member of the Commercial Club of Chicago. Chuck was a Trustee of the University of Chicago. He helped to create what is now its Kersten Institute for Urban Education and is a life member of its College Advisory Council. He was a Trustee of the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, and a member of the National Finance Committee for both Obama presidential campaigns.

He is married to Penny Bender Sebring, PhD, the Co-Founder of the UChicago Consortium on School Research, a principal component of the Kersten Institute. They have three children and five grandchildren. They have jointly received awards from the Golden Apple Foundation; OneGoal; the McGaw YMCA; the Second Baptist Church of Evanston; and they received the Key to the City of Evanston. Chuck also received an award from the Chessmen Club and is a member of the Shaker High School (Latham, N.Y.) Sports Hall of Fame.

