



Patricia Caruso

(1954 -)

Inducted: **2012** *Locale:* **Sault Ste. Marie** *Era:* **Contemporary**
Area(s) of Achievement: **Law Enforcement**

Patricia Caruso's work serves as an inspiration to women in the field of law enforcement and corrections. As the first woman director of the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC), she successfully managed one of the largest corrections systems in the country, operating 32 prisons housing 44,000 prisoners, and supervising 58,000 probationers and 20,000 parolees.

Caruso's leadership and vision enabled her to shift the internal culture of the MDOC to focus on offender success by implementing one of the most effective prisoner reentry programs in the nation. This program works to better prepare prisoners to return to productive, law abiding lives, rather than just centering on safely warehousing prisoners. This initiative has been heralded as a gold standard for corrections and has been emulated by other correctional systems throughout the country. Reductions in the size of Michigan's prison population as well as Michigan's reduced recidivism rate have been attributed to this program.

Caruso also worked to develop paths to leadership within MDOC for women and other minorities by enlisting the assistance of the National Institute of Corrections to develop a women's leadership program for MDOC and by serving on the MDOC Minority Advisory Panel.