Robert W. Block, MD
Nomination Letter by Rick Kaplan, MD

“The Ray Helfer Society, founded in 1999 and incorporated in 2001, is an honorary society of physicians seeking to provide leadership to enhance the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of child abuse and neglect.”

The above Helfer statement is an ideal lead-in to the nomination of Doctor Robert Block for the 2006 Helfer Society Award. If anyone in our community has defined leadership by both word and deed, it is Bob. From the leadership of the Department of Pediatrics in Tulsa, to the development of a pioneering child advocacy center Bob has made the lives of countless children in Oklahoma better and safer. He has fostered the training of pediatric residence with a sensitivity towards and strong knowledge of child maltreatment seldom equaled anywhere in pediatric education.

Bob’s local and regional leadership is just the beginning. For six years, Bob has led COCAN to some of its most productive and timely work. During his tenure the committee has produced consistently solid and innovative work. Bob has left a mark on the committee that will persist for generations.

Perhaps Bob’s most remarkable leadership came in his critical role in the evolution of our subspecialty. With political skill, excellent collaborative skills, and remarkable persistence, Bob has helped to change the face of child abuse pediatrics. While this certainly wasn’t the work of one individual, there is no doubt that without Bob’s leadership we wouldn’t be where we are today.

Bob Block is a clinician, an educator, a department chairman, an outgoing COCAN chair, and the driving force behind the creation of a pediatric child abuse subspecialty. I can think of no one who better defines leadership in our society.