

## **Special Contribution, Association for Death Education and Counseling, 2012**

Judith Stillion, PhD, CT, (L) presenter of the Special Contributions Award, introduced the 2012 recipient, Sandra L. Bertman, PhD, LCSW, FT, (R) as both her friend and long-respected colleague. Stillion noted that Sandy is an author and educator who brings her appreciation of beauty and art to the field of thanatology and to the hard-to-reach population of aspiring medical doctors. Dr. Bertman revealed this gift to the audience through discussion of an "ambiguous figure" akin to the well-known "Rubin's Vase" where one sees a vase and/or two faces looking at each other. In her example, however, we saw both Death and Life; just as we see the two in the art piece, we see both our chosen work. Dr. Bertman demonstrated, rather than just told us, how art helps in our work, as it is a universal language and truly a healing presence in a hurting world.

Bertman received the Association for Death Education and Counseling, Outstanding Death Educator, in 1991. This is only the second time in the 36-year history of the organization that this Special Contributions Award has been granted.



Judith Stillion (L) with Special Contributions Award winner Sandra Bertman (R).