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Holiday Happenings



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Chamber Honors Jones Presents Business Awards at Holiday Fete

By STEVE HUNT
Staff Writer

Doug Jones has been much more than just a businessman operating the Rent-All Center on Richmond Highway since 1975 — he has been a leader in the community working tirelessly for decades to make Mount Vernon and Lee a better place to live for all.

Jones has served as chairman of the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce on three occasions, during which he doubled chamber membership from 150 to 300 businesses.

A staunch Republican who served as chairman of the Mount Vernon Republican Committee for many years, he founded the chamber's influential legislative committee ensuring that elected officials on both sides of the aisle — particularly in the General Assembly when the session meets at the start of year — know where the chamber stands on issues affecting northern Virginia and the commonwealth as a whole.

He served for 12 years as the chamber's representative on the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation making sure that the business community had a voice in the future development of the corridor.

And, as a small business owner, he has provided jobs for dozens, if not hundreds of teens and youth, instilling in them the value of fair wages for a good days work.

For all that and more, Jones was recognized as the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year Friday night at its holiday dinner at the Mount Vernon County Club.

As Dan Rinzel, a former board chairman and a past citizen of the year himself who was just elected to another term on board, put it in his introduction of Jones, "He is my idea of the perfect chamber member."

Chamber chairman Scott Stroh said the award is recognition to individuals who embodies the values and culture of the chamber of commerce.

Rinzel noted that "Doug likes to say that good government requires active citizens," adding "we all owe him a great deal of appreciation."



Staff photo/Steve Hunt

Chamber chair Scott Stroh, left, presents the Citizen of the Year Award to Doug Jones.

Del. Paul Krizek (44th), a staunch Democrat who was active in Mount Vernon District Democratic Committee long before being elected to the House of Delegates two years ago, said while they may not have agreed on many of the issues facing the state, their relationship was built on a foundation of mutual respect.

As for Jones who was a man of few words in accepting the award, he said he is proud to have been a self-described "agent of change" for the business community on the Richmond Highway corridor and doesn't regret the many years of time and effort he devoted to improving the local business climate.

"It's all been worth it," Jones said.

The chamber also presented its Rising Star award recognizing a member under 40 who is making significant contributions to the chamber and community to Josh Toth, manager of the Burke & Herbert Bank branch on Cooper Road.

"He is a strong presence in the bank with his welcoming smile and can-do attitude," said chamber president Sonja Caison, noting that Toth serves on the chamber's board of directors, the board of the Emerging Business Leaders of America and is

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Staff photo/Steve Hunt

Josh Toth of Burke & Herbert Bank, second from left, received the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce Rising Star Award at its Holiday Biz Awards Celebration Friday night. With him from left, are chamber president Sonja Caison, chamber chairman Scott Stroh and outgoing chairman Jane Gandee.

Chamber Gives Awards

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president of the Virginia Bankers Association. He also volunteers with New Hope Housing, West Potomac and Hayfield high schools' financial literacy programs, and with the South County Financial Empowerment Center.

The chamber also presented Excellence in Business Awards to chamber members.

The Fairfax Retirement Community received the award for offering an opportunity for retirees to call The Fairfax home where they can enjoy the freedom of independent living with easy access to assisted living and long-term care.

ACC Family received the award for providing home care to those in northern Virginia and southern Maryland allowing seniors to age in place and live independently for as long as possible.

Mount Vernon Physical Therapy received the award for their mission to provide high quality physical therapy care to the residents of Mount Vernon and surrounding communities and their support in local charity work such as Op Walk Run by Anderson Orthopedics to raise money to do joint replacements in needy countries.

United Community Ministries was recognized as the Non-Profit Organization of the Year for its services provided to between 7,000 and 8,000 vulnerable south county residents annually — 40 percent of who are children, said outgoing chairman Jane Gandee.

She noted that 75 percent of UCM's clients live at or below the federal poverty

level, with an annual income of less than \$25,000 for a family of four.

Gandee pointed out that UCM offers a variety of programs including Stepping Stones, which addresses the basic needs of families, its Early Learning Center providing high quality care for children ages six weeks to five years, and Forward Steps which offers out-of-school time enrichment opportunities for youth, including tutoring and a space with a safe, encouraging environment where they can grow and learn.

UCM also operates its Progreso Center for Literacy and Citizenship providing non-native speakers and immigrants with assistance in citizenship education and computer skills needed on their path to citizenship and better paying jobs as well as Healthy Families Fairfax, a home visiting program that prevents child abuse and neglect in high-risk families.

In accepting the award, UCM executive director Alison DeCoursey encouraged all the business leaders in attendance that evening to "invest in UCM" both as volunteers and financially.

The chamber also presented its new slate of officers: chairman Stroh, president Caison, vice president Stan Koussis, treasurer Chris Reddick and secretary Phyllis Sintay.

Also sworn in were the new chamber board members Don Brideau, Cindy Hurtle, Rinzel, Ana Pilato Stockholm, Tobin Sevin, Ken Board, Don Cammarata, and Alison Ross-Tompkins.

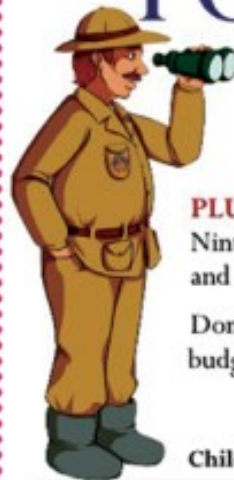
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