



Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Helping to make RR better

Avery family, Carter garner awards at chamber banquet

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The Round Rock Chamber of Commerce honored outgoing and incoming board members along with community and business leaders at its annual awards banquet on Tuesday at the Marriott Hotel.

Rep. John Carter (R-Round Rock) - who was unable to attend the banquet because of commitments in Washington, D.C. - was honored with the Chamber's Lifetime Achievement Award.

"John and I have lived in Round Rock for 35 years," said Carter's wife Erika, who accepted the award on his behalf. "This is our home and it is a great honor to be recognized like this by our friends and neighbors."

Also receiving one of the chamber's top honors were brothers Charles and John Avery, along with their wives Beth and Judy, who were recognized as Citizens of the Year for the family's historic involvement in the development of the Round Rock community.

"I feel like Rip Van Winkle," said Charles. "Beth and I left Round Rock in the '60s and only returned four years ago. This is definitely not my grandfather's Round Rock. I don't deserve this award but I thank you for it anyway."

Drayton McLane - owner of the Houston Astros - served as the guest speaker at the event, where he discussed the importance of the leadership exemplified by chamber members.

"Our responsibility as adults and leaders is to hand our cities off to our children better than we found them," said McLane. "Many cities in Texas want the magic that you have here in Round Rock."

"A leader is a person who takes others places they couldn't go on their own - parents, teachers, ministers, mentors. They ask how they can help others be a success. Leaders have a vision for the future and big ideas, even though they are not always popular. I want to commend all of you for coming together to make this community better."

Geneva Whitlow accepted an award honoring her husband Bunky - who died in October 2006 - for his philanthropy. Norman Gus "Bunky" Whitlow - who served as principal of Round Rock High School and president of Farmers State Bank - contributed both time and money to numerous causes in the community.

"If Bunky were here he would probably say 'Why would I get an award? This was all so much fun,'" she said.

Other awards presented included: The Philanthropy Innovation Award - Round Rock Noon Rotary Club; Drive Renewal Award - Team Stunners; Chairman's Award - Larry Killen of Alpha Omega Communications; Outstanding Member of the Year - Scott Swindell of Checksmart Recovery; Outstanding New Member of the Year - Writ Baese of Hill Country Payroll; Small Business of the Year - Chisholm Trail Financial; Business of the Year - Chasco Construction.

"What makes Round Rock special are the people in this room. I can look around and see three former mayors. Without these people we wouldn't have Dell, the Round Rock Express, our roadways or even drinking water," said incoming Chairman Steve Laukhuf to the crowd of 450. "Without our current leadership we would not have IKEA or the Round Rock Premium Outlets. When the community works together great things happen."

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