



United Way
of Bradley County

Nancy Casson receives top United Way volunteer award

When Nancy Casson is asked to help with a project, she puts everything she has into that task, and her energy gets others to join her in that endeavor. Nowhere is that more evident than in her work over the past several years with United Way of Bradley County.

Casson, owner of the Red Ribbon Gift Shop, received the coveted William F. Johnson Sr. Community Service Award at the United Way of Bradley County Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet Tuesday evening (March 16, 2010). She became the 38th recipient of the award, which is the highest honor given by the local United Way.

The 2009 award recipient, Forrest Preston, presented the award.

"She has served in several different areas of the United Way campaign, and always has been one of the most energetic United Way and community supporters in Cleveland and Bradley County," said Preston. "I am pleased to present her with this award to show our appreciation for all that she has done."

The William F. Johnson Sr. Community Service Award originated in 1977. The award is presented every year to a person who has demonstrated hard work and a passion for the United Way of Bradley County's community efforts.

Casson has served in almost every position within the United Way campaign since becoming involved with the organization. She has served as a Division Chair, a Blue Ribbon Committee member, a Campaign Co-Chair (with incoming Board Chairman Mickey Torbett), a member of the United Way Executive Committee and Board of Directors, which she has also chaired.

This past campaign, Casson once again chaired a division. Division 19, which included Life Care Centers of America and its affiliates, was titled "The Uniquenicks."

“When we were thinking of a title for this division, which was not included in either of our campaign teams, we wanted something that not only fit the division but Nancy,” said United Way Board Chairman Stephen Crass. “There is no doubt that Nancy is a very unique person, so ‘uniquenicks’ just seemed appropriate.”

“Nancy is so full of energy that when she gets involved, you can’t help but want to get involved too,” added United Way of Bradley County President and CEO Brenda Abel. “We see that energy in everything she has worked on with United Way, and look forward to her being involved with us for many years to come.”

Her energy was never more evident than the year that she and Torbett co-chaired the United Way campaign. The two had special contests between their teams which led to Casson washing two cars and even wearing a specially-created vest showing her team’s position versus Torbett’s team.

She has spearheaded the publicity for the local Ace Hardware Labor Day promotion to help United Way, and this past campaign, helped coordinate “Restaurant Tuesday for United Way.” Seventeen different area restaurants participated in this special promotion.

While being involved with United Way campaigns, Casson has also been involved in many other endeavors in this community. She has worked with the Cleveland-Bradley Chamber of Commerce, serving as chairman and with the Chamber’s Allied Arts Council (where she was chairman twice), and its Education/Workforce Development Committee. She is a past recipient of the Athena Award, and earlier this year, received the Robert Varnell Leadership Award from the Chamber.

She has served as chairman of the Junior Achievement Board and has taught JA classes. She has been involved with MainStreet Cleveland, SkyRidge Medical Center’s Healthy Women Board and the hospital’s Board of Directors. She has served on the Bradley-Cleveland Education Foundation Board, on the Cleveland Community Concert Association Board and is a charter member of the Museum Center at Five Points.

“Nancy really cares about this community, and we are so pleased that she is involved with our United Way,” Crass said. “We are also so excited to be able to honor her with this award.”

Previous recipients of the William F. Johnson Sr. Community Service Award, and the years they received the award, include: Forrest Preston, 2009; Terry Henry, 2008; Bob Card and Keith Barrett, 2007; Ricky Sanders, 2006; Georgia Gann, 2005; Cathy Barrett, 2004; John Kimball, 2003; Ron Braam, 2002; Ray Beckler, 2001; Lee Stewart, 2000; Tom Wheeler, 1999; Carolyn Jackson, 1998; Don Lorton, 1997; Jim Breaux, 1996; Charlotte Thorogood, 1995; Nelson Wooldridge, 1994; Ralph Buckner Jr., 1993; Dr. Lewis Willis, 1992; Jim Nowack, 1991; Ken Rayborn, 1990; Steve Bivens and Sam McReynolds, 1989; Hoyle Rymer, 1988; Jim Williams, 1987; Lou Patten, 1986; Wayne Cooke, 1985; Joe Rodgers Jr., 1984; Jerry Ward, 1983; Harry L. Dethero and Dr. T.L. Lowery, 1982; Sam Colbert, 1981; Winston Varnell, 1980; Dr. Fenton Scruggs, 1979; and John Bryan Jr. and Mike Callaway, 1978, and Buck Thorogood, 1977.

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