

"Federation Corner" column  
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### **Annual Civic Federation Awards**

by Jim Humphrey  
member MCCF Awards Committee

Last Friday evening, May 9, the Montgomery County Civic Federation held its Annual Awards Program at the New Fortune restaurant in Gaithersburg. In addition to the honorees, MCCF delegates and spouses, attendees at the event included County Executive Ike Leggett, Representative Chris Van Hollen, Planning Board Vice Chairman John Robinson, five County Councilmembers, three State Senators and five State Delegates from Montgomery County.

Following dinner, the program began with a Special Youth Civic Achievement Award, presented to Sarah Boltuck by State Senator Jamie Raskin. A senior at Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, Ms. Boltuck successfully challenged a court ruling that denied voting rights to certain young residents. For decades, the State Board of Elections had allowed 17-year-olds to register and vote in primary elections if they would turn 18 by the date of the general election. But, a 2006 court ruling opined that primary and general elections should follow the same rules, including the one that states you must be 18 by election day. Together with her father Richard, Sarah launched a campaign for change, joined by students in Anne Arundel County who posted a webpage on Facebook to help educate others about the issue. The organization FairVote then put Sarah and her dad in touch with Senator Raskin, who convinced State Attorney General Doug Gansler to work with the Board of Elections to reverse the court's decision and restore voting rights to some 50,000 young people across Maryland.

Next, the Gazette Award for outstanding public service contributions was presented by Council President Mike Knapp to Barbara Falcigno. Concerned about overdevelopment of the Upper Rock Creek and Olney area, in 2003 Barbara and a few of her neighbors started the Olney Coalition. The group is an independent non-partisan network of individuals and neighborhood groups currently representing nearly 3,000 households, with a mission to preserve the semi-rural residential character and qualities of life valued by Olney residents--fine schools, excellent roads, and a healthy environment.

Ms. Falcigno was also instrumental in helping coordinate citizen input on the Olney Master Plan revision and insuring citizen representation on the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee which oversees implementation of that Plan. In addition, she served as co-chair in 2004 of the annual book sale fundraiser for Montgomery General Hospital, and chaired the event in 2005 and 2006. Barbara was elected Vice President of Greater Olney Citizens Association (GOCA) in 2006 and President for 2007-08, all while serving on the board of her neighborhood civic, the Olney Oaks Single Family Homeowners Association. Under her leadership, GOCA initiated informal "community conversations" before meetings to strengthen networking and information sharing, and worked to mitigate the negative impact on the community from construction of the InterCounty Connector highway.

This year the Sentinel Award, given in recognition of significant contributions to good government at the local level, was presented by Councilmember Roger Berliner to the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (CCCFH). This coalition of area civic groups was formed in 1971, in anticipation of the revision of the Friendship Heights Sector Plan, and has met monthly ever since. CCCFH members helped in establishing the standards for the Central Business District (CBD) zoning category, first used in the 1974 Friendship Heights Plan. That master plan revision was the first in Montgomery to decrease the allowed density of development on certain parcels, and CCCFH joined with the county in a court case that successfully upheld the right to downzone. The group also engaged in the first Clean Water Act enforcement suit in the county, forcing WMATA to stop oil leaking from its garage into Willett Branch.

Over the years, CCCFH members have helped advance many issues with county wide impact, such as legislation to tighten storm water management requirements, reduce the impact of mansionization on adjacent homeowners, and place parking restrictions on those engaged in at-home occupations. CCCFH members have gone on to serve on the Planning Board (Pat Baptiste, Betty Ann Krahnke, and Meredith Wellington), the Board of Appeals (former member Donna Barron and current Chairman Allison Fultz), and the County Council (Betty Ann Krahnke). Currently comprised of 16 neighborhood groups, the CCCFH is making preparations for the upcoming revision of the Sector Plan for Westbard, in south Bethesda, and has already conducted a community survey and engaged consultants to help create preliminary designs.

The final honoree of the evening was Wayne Goldstein, the 2008 recipient of the Star Cup, awarded to the MCCF delegate performing outstanding public service to the county. Councilmember Marc Elrich presented the trophy. Mr. Goldstein entered the arena of civic activism in 1997 as part of a coalition effort concerned with speed bumps that resulted in new county regulations. He followed up in 1999 with a successful push to prevent Montgomery College from constructing its Cultural Arts Center in Silver Spring's historic Jesup Blair Park, the issue that brought him to MCCF. His interest in historic preservation grew, and Wayne became an officer in Montgomery Preservation Inc. (MPI) in June 2000, then President in '02. His efforts have contributed to the preservation of several historic county homes, including the farm houses and outbuildings on the Crown Farm site in Gaithersburg, and the Sarah L. Brown House in Bethesda.

In 2004 and 2005, prompted by an idea of Wayne's, MPI hosted Mansionization Conferences to educate residents on ways to minimize the impact on neighborhoods from the teardown/rebuild craze. And, in 2006 he helped MPI plan and host a charrette to save one of the first and best examples of modern office building architecture in the nation, the COMSAT building in Clarksburg, and secured the participation of its world-renowned architect, Cesar Pelli, in the event. The effort resulted in the developer of the COMSAT site working with the community to preserve the historical structure.

Wayne has served as an officer in his local Kensington Heights Citizens Association since 2005 and as its delegate to the Federation since 2000. He has worked on most MCCF committees, and frequently testifies before the Council and Planning Board on behalf of the Federation. He served as MCCF First Vice President from 2004 through '06, then as President from 2006 through '08. Sentinel readers will recognize Wayne as a primary contributor to this column, which he sees as a way of educating the public and energizing them into action.

Citations from the Senate and House of the Maryland General Assembly were delivered to each of the MCCF honorees by Sen. Rona Kramer and Del. Brian Feldman. In addition, Bernard and Lynn Kapiloff, publisher and CEO of The Montgomery Sentinel, were presented with a certificate conferring Honorary Membership in MCCF in recognition of their support of the civic community. And a special citation was given by Bette Ann Petrides, of Citizens for a Better Bethesda, to Mr. Goldstein for his help in protecting a champion cherry tree in the Landon Woods subdivision.