

"Federation Corner" column
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2010 Civic Federation Awards

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Each year the Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) salutes those individuals and organizations who have done the most to help improve public service and governance in the County. This year's Awards Banquet will be held on Friday, May 14, 6:00 – 9:30 PM, at the Conference Center at the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville. This event is an annual tradition for the Civic Federation, established in 1925 as the umbrella organization for community organizations and leaders dedicated to more accountable government.

The Wayne Goldstein Award, which is conferred on an individual or group for outstanding public service to the people of Montgomery County, will be given to Hearts & Homes for Youth. That organization began its long history of helping youth in need in February 1964. Originally incorporated as the non-profit Boys' Home of Montgomery County, the group was founded by attorney Mel Feldman and The Honorable Alfred D. Noyes, Judge of the Juvenile Court. They believed that young men who at that time were labeled "delinquent" or "incorrigible" could become productive members of society, if given the opportunity to grow and mature in a wholesome, family setting. Four boys were housed in the original Boys' Home, which consisted of two attic rooms of an old farmhouse in Rockville that was being run as a halfway house for psychiatric patients. The group changed its name when it expanded its mission to provide services to girls as well as boys.

As current President and CEO of Hearts & Homes for Youth, Rex Smith oversees the only shelter specifically for children and youth in Montgomery County, eight group homes, three independent living programs, a therapeutic foster care program, a Runaway Prevention Program, Art and Recreational Therapy programs, and a staff dedicated to the mission of helping troubled children and youth who are abused, neglected or runaways become independent, productive adults. MCCF Past President Jorge Ribas will present the Goldstein Award to Hearts & Homes for Youth.

Montgomery Preservation Inc. will receive the Sentinel Award, sponsored by the Montgomery Sentinel newspaper. That award is given to an individual or group for a significant contribution to good government at the local level. With its roots as a local committee of the Maryland Historical Trust in the 1970s, Montgomery Preservation Inc. was founded in 1984 and is the only countywide, private, non-profit historic preservation organization in Montgomery County. Its mission is to preserve, protect and promote the county's rich architectural heritage and historic landscapes. MPI works with groups, public officials, and businesses to ensure that historic preservation plays a role in the economic revitalization and development challenges of the 21st century. Through their website and events, such as conferences on mansionization, MPI seeks to educate the public about County heritage resources and the role of preservation in creating livable, economically vital communities.

MPI efforts to strengthen county preservation law, seek judicial appeal of deleterious government decisions, and promote heritage tourism in the county all serve to highlight the importance of historic preservation as a public policy. The group is also owner of the Silver Spring B&O Railroad Station, which has been restored to its 1945 opening day appearance and is available for rental for meetings, performances, and events. The current President of MPI is Lorraine Pearsall. Maryland State Senator Jamie Raskin (D.-Dist. 20) will be on hand to present the Sentinel Award to MPI.

The Star Cup, sponsored by the Civic Federation, is awarded to a delegate or committee of the Federation for outstanding public service on behalf of Montgomery County. This year's recipient is the MCCF Planning and

Land Use Committee. That Committee provides basic information to individuals and communities on the full range of county government land use and planning processes, and recommends positions on current issues for consideration by the Federation's delegate assembly. Members have participated in, or consulted on, rezoning, Special Exception, and Variance cases, as well as the biennial growth policy and revisions of area master plans.

The PLU committee also participates in or closely monitors government working groups and advisory committees that address land use and zoning matters. Members of the committee regularly testify at Planning Board and County Council hearings on planned development projects and also on proposed legislation within the jurisdiction of the committee. The members of the committee during the past year were: Jim Humphrey, Chair; Max Bronstein; Eileen Finnegan; Natalie Goldberg; Kathie Hulley; Virginia Sheard; and Wayne Goldstein, who passed away in April of 2009. Montgomery County Councilmember Marc Elrich (D.-At Large) will be in attendance to present the Star Cup to the members of the Federation's Planning and Land Use Committee.

Those interested in attending the event can go to the Federation website--www.montgomerycivic.org--for reservation information.

The views expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect formal positions adopted by the Federation. To submit an 800-1000 word column for consideration, send as an email attachment to theelms518@earthlink.net