

As one of my last duties as your Interim Mayor, I am humbled to be able to select a Citizen of the Year for 2017.

There are many good things happening in our small city right now - PermaCity Life, Mill City Park and Franklin Light & Power Mill to name just a few. Behind this current growth and momentum are many individuals deserving of our thanks for their part but there are also many individuals that for years have been giving of their time and energy to make Franklin a better place to live.

Last year's recipient, Stephen Donahue is a perfect example of an individual who has given of himself unselfishly to our community's betterment year after year. There are obviously many other individuals and families that, like Steve, have regularly given of themselves to make a HUGE difference in the community that we live in.

So, tonight I am breaking from tradition and instead of recognizing one individual, I want to recognize all those, who collectively, through their time and energy have made and continue to make Franklin a better place to live.

This year's Citizens of the Year are: Franklin's Community Volunteers.

Our community would be little to nothing without these dedicated unsung heroes and there are hundreds of them throughout our entire community be it in government, nonprofit, civic, fraternal, sports or spiritual organizations. Franklin's very fabric is made of blue collar, hardworking, families who have the constant challenge of balancing work and family life but who routinely find the time to volunteer to make Franklin a much better place.

This year's award goes to those volunteers who have freely given passionately of their time for years, or even decades, such as the Gilchrist & Morrill families to the Franklin Outing Club, Leigh Webb to the Franklin Historical Society, Ken Lind & Steve Proulx to the Lakes Region Snowmobile Club, Judith Ackerson to the Concord Monitor Crier, the Collins & Bourdeau families to the Franklin Elks, David Veysey to the Franklin Planning Board, Julie & Jack Finely to Franklin Opera House to name but a few.

Then there are the countless individuals that serve on Board of Trustees or Board of Directors such as: George Dzjuna for Choose Franklin, Claire Wallace for the Bread and Roses Kitchen, Jim Wells for HealthFirst, Katherine Zink for Trustees of

the Trust Fund, Bob Lucas for the Mayor's Drug Task Force, Ron Magoon for the Franklin Animal Shelter, Heather Moquin for the Footlight Theater, Judy Emerson for the Thrift Clothes Closet, Karen Grzelak for the Franklin VNA & Hospice, Ted Starkweather for the Franklin Business & Industrial Development Corporation, as well as the many spiritual Parish committee members guiding our many local churches.

Boardwork is difficult but very important for every organization.

In my opinion, the most important community volunteer board in Franklin, is our School Board and I would like to thank Tim, Scott, Susan, Anya, Jeff, Deborah, Lisa, Robin & Paul for all of your dedication and hard work.

The last group of unsung heroes making a difference is made up of those without a formal group or organizational structure but who still have a strong desire to help in whatever way they can. A few examples would be Lynne & Bill Burns for their quarterly beautifications of Trestle View Park and Jeff Perkins for his weekly systematic removal of Franklin's roadside litter. You certainly do not need to be a member of a group to make a big impact.

This plaque will be hung in the lobby so as each community volunteer enters this hall they will see that their countless volunteer hours are truly appreciated by their City each and every day.

Someone once very appropriately said "Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in."

Our community is fortunate to have so many volunteers and of course, there is always opportunity for more people to vote daily for the kind of community they want to live in through volunteerism.

I sincerely thank those who I mentioned by name and the many more that I have not.

Thank you.