



News Release

Junior Service League Announces Recipients of its Award for Distinctive Service

Nov. 2, 2009

SPRINGFIELD, Ohio – Junior Service League will honor two past members with its Award for Distinctive Service at its annual Sustainer Tea at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 7, in the ballroom of the Courtyard by Marriott in downtown Springfield.

The award will recognize DeWandia Higgins and Elaine Stevenson for their spirit of community service.

“DeWandia Higgins and Elaine Stevenson have demonstrated leadership, compassion and community service. They have directly impacted the Springfield community,” said Heather Leifheit, 2009-2010 president of Junior Service League. “Their generosity of spirit inspires other to take an active role in the Springfield community.”

“We wanted to recognize past members who exemplify the spirit of Junior Service League. Just as Mrs. Bertha Crabill, Mrs. Margaret Martin and Mrs. Laura Mae Carlisle took an active interest in charitable and civic enterprise when they founded the Springfield Junior Service League in 1933, our award recipients reflect that same commitment of community service.”

Higgins, a member of Junior Service League from 1970 to 1975, was president of the organization in 1974. She served on various committees, including community research. She chaired the Follies committee in 1972. She has continued to support league by being a sustaining member.

Outside of Junior Service League, Higgins has impacted Springfield with her volunteer work on several boards throughout the community. She has served on the Hearing and Speech Board, the Mental Health Board, Budget and Admissions for United Way, Red Cross Board, YMCA Board, Springfield Arts Council, Hertzler House Board, the Community Welfare Board, Community Planning Council, Camp Evergreen Board and the Salvation Army Board.

She volunteered at Clark Memorial Home, Clark County Children’s Home and Mueller Center. She also was the costume director for the Springfield Opera Company. In addition, she is a member of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. Higgins served on the church council and taught Sunday School for many years.

“DeWandia Higgins is one of those dependable, capable women, who quietly do a great job and are not looking for public recognition,” said Lori Bartell, who nominated Higgins. Bartell received the 2008 Award for Distinctive Service, along with Mary Lu Noonan and Gretta Runyan. “I also have seen her

tenderly caring for elderly members of the community who don't have others to advocate for them. She is most worthy of this award.”

Stevenson, 1976-1977 president of Junior Service League, was an active member from 1972 to 1980. As an active member, she volunteered at the Town and Country Day Center, Springview Center, Mercy Pediatrics, Meals on Wheels, Puppets and Bargain Big Top. She was the director of “Velveteen Rabbit” as part of Junior Theatre. She worked with the Volunteer Service Bureau Christmas Clearing House for needy families. In addition, Stevenson worked on the 1976 and 1999 Follies fundraisers. She also served on the league's community research committee, finance committee and advertising campaign for Follies. Since 1980, she has been a sustaining member of league.

A realtor with Roediger Realty, Stevenson has impacted the Springfield community with her involvement in various community organizations. She is active in her church, High Street United Methodist Church. She has served on numerous committees as a member of the Springfield Chapter of Rotary International, and is a Paul Harris Fellow. Stevenson is the vice chair of the Clark County Planning Commission and is a director on the board of the Springfield Small Business Development Center. She is currently a director on the board of the Springfield Arts Council, serving as president in 1986-87. She began a second term in 2009 with the council. Stevenson is a member of the board of directors and the development committee of the Women's Association Springfield Symphony. She has served as a director on the Springfield Board of Realtors. She currently represents the Board of Realtors as a WRIST director.

Stevenson is immediate past president of WRIST (Western Regional Information Systems and Technology), a multiple listing services board for Clark, Champaign, Miami, Mercer, Auglaize, Shelby and Logan counties. She is a member of the Real Estate Buyers Agency Council (REBAC) and is an accredited buyer representative. She also has served on the Wittenberg Guild, chairing the 1989 and 1990 Wittenberg Guild Style Shows. In addition, she is a past member of Young Woman's Mission Board of Directors, a volunteer Christmas shopper for the Rocking Horse Children's Medical Center, past vice chair of the Clark County Red Cross Board, past member of Zonta, Shawnee High School Band and Orchestra Parents, Possum Middle School PTO and Cub Scouts.

“Lives have been enhanced by Elaine Stevenson giving back to the community in order to make improvements for the future generations of children and grandchildren,” said Runyan, who nominated Stevenson. “Her loving spirit inspires others.”

Junior Service League, a nonprofit women's organization, supports and enhances the Springfield community through community service projects and fund-raisers.

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Contact:
Heather Maurer
Junior Service League
(937) 342-1654
E-mail: rmaurer8@woh.rr.com