

Leaders in Service fundraiser adds nearly \$78,000 to club foundation

Honoring four outstanding leaders, the Leaders in Service Awards netted almost \$78,000, a record, for the club's non-profit foundation. The money will be used for our projects and grants during the Rotary Year beginning July 1.

The third annual Leaders in Service Awards presented at the May 1 award banquet included a first-ever Legacy Award, meant to recognize a lifetime of contributions to our community. This went to **Bertha Boykin Todd**, a retired educator and lifelong activist for racial justice and reconciliation.

The other three honored have made outstanding contributions to the community in one or more of the seven Rotary Areas of Focus. They have also led their lives and conducted their business in harmony with the Four-Way Test and have demonstrated a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The banquet at UNC-Wilmington was attended by some 300 people, including Rotarians, sponsors, the honorees, and their guests. Sponsors made contributions ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 each; individual tickets were also sold. Leaders in Service is the club's only major fundraiser.

Total proceeds topped \$107,000 before expenses were subtracted, well over our \$100,000 goal.

The 2024 Leaders in Service honorees are:

Public sector: **Dr. Charles Hardy** was the founding dean of UNC-Wilmington's College of Health and Human Services, established in 2010. His award recognizes his years of effort to increase the number of health professionals available to work in New Hanover County and in the broader region. His award reflects accomplishments toward three of Rotary International's areas of focus: disease preven-



Accepting her award, Bertha Todd shows a 'Four-Way Test' card a member of this club gave her in the 1970s. She said she often cited the Four-Way Test in counseling her students.

tion and treatment, maternal and child health, and economic and community development.

Private sector: **Brian McMerty**, a managing partner of the executivesearch firm Arris Partners, helped lead the merger that created the Boys & Girls Club of Southeastern N.C., overcoming a century-long racial divide between two previously separate organizations. He also established the Men on a Mission volunteer group at Wilmington's St. James Episcopal Church. He and his wife have conserved environmentally sensitive sites through groups including the Coastal Land Trust. His award recognizes his support of several of the Rotary areas of focus: health, education, economic development, and the environment.

Non-profit sector: **Connie Parker** founded Wilmington Health Access for Teens in 1995, and was its executive director through 2005. She now has director "emeritus" status. She is also devoted to restoring Wilmington's tree canopy. She founded the Alliance for Cape Fear Trees and serves as its president and acting executive director. Her Leaders in Service award recognizes her work toward Rotary's areas of focus on maternal and child health, economic and community development, and the environment.

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Grandey to lead club in 2025-26 Rotary year

The club's membership voted May 21 to ratify the Board of Directors' selection of **David Grandey** as president-nominee. He will succeed **Debby Gomulka** as our president in July 2026.

David joined this club in 2018, after 14 years in other Rotary Clubs. He was elected to our Board of Directors in 2022. He has been active on a number of committees, notably those concerned with the Boys & Girls Home and with membership.

Also elected were the five members of the Board, who will serve from July 2024 through June 2027. They are: Past President **Stacy Ankrum**; **Ramona Farrell; Bob Kitchen; Peter Maloff**; and **Taft Martin**. They will take office at the June 25 induction banquet, along with 2024-25 President **Paul Lawler**.



David Grandey

Habitat house is done, family makes it home



Tysheia, owner of the Habitat for Humanity Rotary Build House, celebrates the closing with her children. She and other members of her family contributed 'sweat equity,' working alongside Rotarians and other Habitat volunteers.

Leaders in Service

Between 1952 and 1968, Bertha Todd

was librarian at the all-Black Willis-

ton High School. When New Hanover

County Schools were desegregated and Williston closed, she was assigned to

the new Hoggard High School. There,

she helped students navigate the turmoil and violence that followed deseg-

She soon became an assistant princi-

regation from 1968 through 1971.

Continued from page 1



Celebrating along with the house's owners are many of the volunteers who contributed to its construction. Those from our club include Christina Ferris, Steve Yates, Mimi Cunninghma, Donna Shiro, and Paul Lawler. At far right is District Governor Allen Quigley.

The Habitat for Humanity house that Rotary volunteers, including many from this club, helped to build for a single mother and her children was declared complete on April 24.

Celebrating at the Castle Havne property, along with new owner Tysheia and her children, were representatives of the clubs that helped with the project's \$60,000 budget and volunteered their members' amateur carpentry skills.

The Rotary Build project began in January 2023, with assembly of modular wall sections in Habitat's warehouse work space.

The job's next phase was delayed until October 2023 because of problems with permits for utilities in a brand-new subdivision. A wall-raising work day at the home site got the house mostly framed.

In November, volunteer builders finished roof and wall sheathing and installed vinyl siding.

Additional work days early this year completed painting and installing hardware. Paid professionals handled the plumbing, HVAC and electrical systems.

Among those coordinating the project was Rotarian Christina Ferris, who is on staff at Habitat.



Accepting their awards on May 1: Dr. Charles Hardy, Brian McMerty, and Connie Parker.

white-supremacist insurrection that overturned Wilmington's bi-racial city government, forcibly exiled leading Black citizens, and largely destroyed a thriving Black business community.

Todd drafted the Foundation's statement of philosophy, which said all of Wilmington's residents shared the responsibility to understand our city's history and "to make our community one where economic justice and racial harmony flourish." After 1998, she worked to create a memorial to victimes of the 1898 insurrection, which the date of the now stands on North Third Street.

The club's Leaders in Service committee stated, "We strongly believe

that Bertha has lived a life that fully embraces the behaviors identified in the Four-Way Test, has clearly demonstrated significant courage to defend these principles, and maintained a constructive approach to address ceremonies for the the need for racial equality."



was master of awards banquet.



Tory and Ella Hilliard, David Grandey, Nancy Bullock, Matt Hilliard, Eileen Stefan, Dale Lazar, Paul Lawler, and Debbie Lazar at the N.C. Boys and Girls Homes' Rotary Cottage.

Boys and Girls Homes host open house for Rotary Day

The club sent a delegation to Lake Waccamaw on March 23, when the Boys and Girls Homes of North Carolina held their annual Rotary Day. Visitors toured the campus, shared a meal, and visited the newly remodeled Rotary Cottage.

Attending were David Grandey, Matt Hilliard and his daughters Tory and Ella, Dale Lazar and his wife Debbie, Eileen Stefan, Nancy Bullock, and Paul Lawler. Rotary day brings together members of dozens of Rotary Clubs from two districts to learn more about the facility,



young people and families in need. Our club's delegation brought a check for \$1,000, part of the \$24,492, plus supplies, that the Homes raised from Rotary visitors that day.

International Committee seeks new projects, large and small

to equip a rural medical clinic in Honduras, the club is looking for new international projects.



After successfully completing a major Global Grant project Those could be big-the Honduras project had a \$44,280 budget—or small, in the \$1,000 to \$2,500 range, International Committee Chair Gabe Rich said at our April 26 meeting. He mentioned several potential ideas, involving Moldova in Eastern Europe and Rwanda in central Africa, as well as the ongoing Kiva microloans project, and help for orphanages in Ukraine and for Ukrainian war refugee families in Wilmington. The committee is establishing a formal

review process for potential projects. Because they are subject to close controls from The Rotary Foundation, Global Grant projects are necessarily more complex, and typically involve contributions from multiple Rotary Clubs. For example, our Honduras project got financial support from seven other area clubs, plus two in other states.

Gabe suggested that we might similarly sign on to help global projects sponsored by other clubs. These might be clubs some of our members previously belonged to.

pal and held that position until retiring in 1992. A member of local and state human relations boards. she advised mayors, superintendents, and governors.

She was co-

chair of the 1898 Centennial Foun-Bertha Todd listens as dation. It marked **Rotarian Rob Zapples** describes her career.

Tom Lamont of the Boys & Girls Homes welcomes Paul Lawler, Butch Blanchard of the Whiteville Rotary Club, Dale Lazar, and Nancy Bullock to the Rotary Cottage.

Built in the 1960s to house teenage boys, the Rotary Cottage recently underwent a major renovation. This club helped finance its construction. We havecontributed furnishings and other amenities, and taken residents on outings, in the decades since.





Members of the team behind the Leaders in Service awards banquet and associated fund-raising efforts were recognized on May 7. From left, Mollie Shiflet, Albert Sementa, Cat Marinich, Jack Manock, John Meyer, Vicki Scott, Bob Kitchen, Donna Cameron, John Hatcher, Terri Everett, Lou DiGiusto, and Gabe Rich. For more on this, SEE: page 1.



Dori Bishara

Honor Flight gets escort

Rotarian Dori Bishara was among the volunteer "guardians" who helped military veterans visit important monuments to their service in Washington D.C. She described the April 29 Honor Flight at the May 7 meeting. In previous years, this club has provided support for Honor Flight, which depends on volunteers.

Williston work includes student awards, ecology field trip

Our Student of the Month awards continued this spring at Williston Middle School. On March 20 and April 17, delegations of Rotarians joined the honored students and their families for award presentations in the school library.

Students of the Month are nominated by Williston's faculty. Those recognized have demonstrated that they conduct themselves in harmony with Rotary's Four-Way Test. Usually five students from each grade are presented with certificates and a variety of gifts; included are copies of their teachers' citations, which are read aloud as part of the ceremony.

The awards have been a part of our Legacy Project partnership with Williston since it began in 2011. In other Williston news:





• The club's new Environmental Committee supplied chaperones March 21 for a field trip to Burnt Mill Creek sponsored by Cape Fear River Watch. Wil-

liston students

were intro-

Vince Howe, co-chair of Environmental Committee.



Howard Loving, Elliot O'Neal, Nancy Bullock, and Laura Lisle.

Rotarians posing for a group photograph with Williston Students of the Month on March 20 include

Donna Shiro, Tolis Vardakis, Marty Feurer, Vince Howe, Paul Lawler, Steve Lester, Cathy Barlow,

duced to the ecology of coastal wetlands, including that tidal creek. The chaperones included Peter Maloff and Michael Gillespie, according to committee co-chair Vince Howe's report to the club on March 26.

• Rotarian volunteers will serve a recent years.



e: Honored students on March 20. Left: Vince Howe, Cathy Barlow, Howard Loving, Elliot O'Neal, and Nancy Bullock congratulate an honored student. Laura Lisle reads teachers' citations.

teacher appreciation lunch to Williston's faculty and staff on Wednesday, June 5. This annual meal, catered at the club's expense and served by our members, has been another regular part of our support for the school in

Literacy Committee hopes to double budget

To meet community needs, and take \$6.300 to benefit six elementary advantage of this year's successful



Co-chair Debby Gomulka discussed the committee's

the

Debby Gomulka delivers LIteracy Committee report.

special Literacy Day program on April 26.

schools: \$5,000 of that to buy books, the rest for school supplies. For next year, Debby said, it will ask for double that amount. It is also possible that the club might expand its literacy partnerships beyond

the six schools we have supported in ing from our recent years. To learn more about what non-profit we do to help children's reading skills, representatives from several other public schools attended the meeting as guests.

The committee's new co-chair described a new approach to getting books (and encouragement from mengoals during a tors) to school children. Nicolette Fulton said she learned about this program when a member of the Wake County This year, the committee spent Bar Association, which pioneered it.

In simple terms, teachers match volunteers with children who need help reading. The essential goal, she said, was less about skill or fluency than about "learning to love to read."

A major portion of the Literacy Day program came from Matilda Scott, now assistant principal at Sunset Park Elementary School. (She was formerly at Williston Middle School.) Scott described an initiative called the Family Reading Experience, which should be in operation when the 2024-25 school year begins in August.

The Family Reading Experience is a project of the New Hanover County Schools' "Turnaround Task Force," which aims to improve performance at the schools serving the county's lowest-income families.



Putting the 'happy' in Happy Hour: Charlotte Davis, David Grandey, Allan Lusk, Racheal Prosise, and Donna Shiro at Fifth Wednesday social May 29.



Committee chairs: help our PR people tell your stories

The Public Relations Committee is streamlining how we gather and distribute information about the club's activities, both among ourselves and to the public.

Monthly, we will ask all the club's committees for a short summary of what they are working on, recent accomplishments, and any upcoming events. PR Committee member Rosemary Guendner will email all the committee chairs to ask for these updates. She assembles them in a secure online spreadsheet, which other members of the committee will use as a basis for the club's communications.

Those include this newsletter, the District 7730 newsletter, our website, news media releases, and social media postings.

As we have learned through the successful Leaders in Service fundraising campaign, informing the public about Service Above Self and what the club does with our resources is crucial to motivating non-Rotarians to help us.

Have questions about this? Contact Rosie Guendner or John Meyer.

Time to update member headshots

Production begins soon on the club's handbook, which will need up-to-date photos of every member. New members, or anyone who wants a fresh photo made, should see Robby Collins or John Meyer. Or, if you have a portrait vou like, email it to *imever1@ec.rr.com*.



Fifth Wednesday attracts Rotarians from area clubs

The "Fifth Wednesday" social May 29 drew a big crowd of Rotarians to the Shuckin' Shack Oyster Bar on Front Street. Hosts for these events supply snacks and hors d'ouevres; those attending buy their own drinks.

These informal gatherings are meant to help members of all six Rotary Clubs in Wilmington get to know each other better. There is no program or agenda, only a focus on cultivating "good will and better friendships."

As the name suggests, these are scheduled only in months that have five Wednesdays.

Left: Larry Anderson. Steve Yates, Cat Marinich, and Greg Marinich hob-nob at ooftop bar.

Right: Katie Corpening with Jimmy Brewer, one of our very newest members.





S Weekly raffle pot tops \$1,500! Drawing odds now 1 in 10



If your ticket is the fourth one picked, you draw from the deck. If you pull the King of Clubs or the Queen of Clubs (get it?), you win one-third of the jackpot! High-stakes gamblers who buy 10 or more tickets get to draw two cards. As of June 4, the winner stands to collect well over \$500. Of the 20 cards remaining in the deck, two are winners!

Win big dollars! Help the CART fund! Astonish your friends!

Our weekly raffle contributes to the CART fund and research against Alzheimer's disease. Tickets are \$1 each or five for \$3. If yours is one of four drawn each week, you win five bucks, cash money! The fourth winner gets a shot at the jackpot, which grows each week. And as cards are pulled from the deck, the odds also steadily improve.





R.B. Richey presents President-nominee Debby Gomulka with her Paul Harris Fellow medallion on May 28.

Fellowship marks Foundation giving

The club honored a donor to The Rotary Foundation as a Paul Harris Fellow on May 28. President-nominee Debby Gomulka received a pin, a medallion, and a certificate to acknowledge gifts of \$1,000 or more.

Foundation Chair R.B. Richey made the presentation.

Grant would restore Rotary garden masonry

Now nearly 60 years old, the Rotary Wheel Garden in Greenfield Park needs maintenance to ensure its brick walls can last another 60 or more

Terry Smith, chair of the Rotary Wheel Garden Committee, reported that a request is pending for a \$5,000 District Grant. That would pay for professional repointing of the walls' mortar joints

As of mid-March, Terry said, "the garden is in great shape." Daffodils were in bloom and hydrangeas budding. He noted that an unknown volunteer had powerwashed the six benches around the central gazebo, removing mold and grime.

A 1965 gift to the City of Wilmington to mark this club's 50th anniversary, the garden consists of brick walls and concrete walkways in the shape of Rotary's gear-wheel emblem. The bricks were laid by masonry students from the former Williston High School, the then-segregated school for African-Americans.

It's inevitable that mortar will deteriorate and eventually must be restored by repointing, roughly every 50 years or so.

Club gets to know new members

Since early March, the club has added two new members. They, and two others inducted earlier, introduced themselves through newmember talks.

First to speak was **Eileen Stefan**, on March 19. Once a competitive swimmer, she said, she still enjoys dancing. Formerly in insurance sales, she switched to real estate, then moved from New Jersey to Wilmington. Inducted Feb. 6, she was sponsored by Debby Gomulka.

Also inducted Feb. 6 was Lauren Matthews Ramchandran. She gave her talk on April 2. She was sponsored by her father, Hansen Matthews.

Jimmy Brewer and Tiffany Barlow were inducted on May 7.



Eileen Stefan Lauren Ramchandran

and both gave their new-member talks May 28.

Jimmy, who works in information systems, moved to Wilmington from Raleigh in 2020. He was inducted May 7. His sponsor is Lynn Boney.

Tiffany is a financial services professional, manager of Morgan Stanley's Wilmington office. She was sponsored by Joe Owen.



District Governor Allen Quigley helps Secretary Elliot O'Neal induct Jimmy Brewer and Tiffany Barlow at the May 7 meeting. Both new members addressed the club on May 28.



Golfers accept trophy for winning scores

Our club's annual golf outing was recognized on April 26. took place March 21, as part of the Paws Ability tournament.

The best team participating in our Grandey and Richard Formo, and Golf Fore Fun piece of the tourney their teammate Adam Cardin.

Chris Hoenig presented a trophy

to the winners, Rotarians David

Chris Hoenig

hows David

Adam Cardin

he 'Golf Fore

Fun' traveling

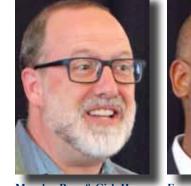
where their

names are engraved on

trophy.

Grandey,

Richard



Murphy: Boys & Girls Home

Foust: NHC school district



Halanych: marine science



Crane: local radio new **McCarthy: sea turtles**

Newsletter photos

by Robby Collins, Alan Cradick, David Grandey, Matt Hilliard, John Meyer, and Donna Shiro.



B&G Homes, SEE: page 3. Rotarian Dr. Charles Foust, superintendent of schools, reported on March 26 about New Hanover County Schools' Turnaround Task Force for low-performing schools.

On April 2, Lakesha McDay, a vice president of the New Hanover Community Endowment, discussed how the Endowment is managing the \$1.25 billion from sale of New Hanover Regional Medical Center. Rotarian Čedric Dickerson, a member of the Endowment board, also offered info.

Challenges facing the City of Wilmington, including growth in surrounding counties and the need to replace the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, was the topic on April 9, when Mayor Bill Saffo spoke. Dr. Kenneth Halanych, direc-

tor of UNC-Wilmington's Center for Marine Science, spoke April 23 about the research, teaching, and business development taking place at his institution. April 23 was Literacy Day. Pres-

ident-nominee Debby Gomulka, chair of our Literacy Committee, introduced a program that included Matilda Scott, assistant principal of Sunset Park Elementary School. For more on this, SEE: page 4.

The club did not meet April 30 because of the Leaders in Service awards banquet the next day. For details of that event, SEE: page 1.

Schools, government, nature and news are program topics

Both Rotarians and guest speakers have presented programs recently.

Marc Murphy, president and CEO of the N.C. Boys & Girls Homes at Lake Waccamaw, gave us an update on facilities and programs on March 19. For Rotary Day at the

The May 7 program was presented by Janice McCarthy, of the Wrightsville Beach Sea Turtle Project. She discussed how conservationists are helping to protect loggerheads and other sea turtles as they nest on area beaches.

On May 14, Rotarians Kevin Crane and Mark Mendenhall described how broadcasters and online news media are filling the gap left by the erosion of local print journalism. Kevin is general manager of WHQR public radio; Mark is GM of WECT-TV6.

Filmmaker Kristi Ray was our speaker May 21, talking about her production company and its efforts to improve opportunities for women in the movie business.

Joe Suleyman, New Hanover County's recycling and solid waste director, talked May 28 about his work to reuse as much waste material as possible, reducing the amount that goes into the landfill.



Erin Payne helps guest speaker Janice McCarthy by displaying a loggerhead sea turtle's carapace at the May 7 meeting.







Upcoming programs & events

TUESDAY, JUNE 4

The U.S. Navy on D-Day, 1944, with Rotarian **Wilbur Jones**, retired Navy captain and military historian.

TUESDAY, JUNE 11

Preventing child abuse, with **Rebecca Martin** of Carousel Child Advocacy Center.

MONDAY, JUNE 17

Board of Directors meeting, 5:00 p.m., Henry's Restaurant and Bar, 2508 Independence Blvd.

TUESDAY, JUNE 18

Rotary's Peace Center at UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke, with **Randy Lickey** of Capital City Rotary Club.

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

Annual induction banquet, with President-elect **Paul Lawler**. 6 p.m., Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St. Free for members; cash bar; reservations required.

TUESDAY, JULY 2

No meeting. Independence Day holiday.

TUESDAY, JULY 9

Five hundred years of Wilmington area history, with **Chris Fonvielle**, retired UNCW history professor.

MONDAY, JULY 15

Board of Directors meeting, 5:15 p.m., LS3P Architects conference room, 101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor.

TUESDAY, JULY 16

The Frying Pan Shoals Light Tower, past, present, and future, with **Richard Neal**, the tower's current owner.

TUESDAY, JULY 23

Newest exhibits and programs at Cameron Art Museum, with CAM Executive Director **Heather Wilson**.

TUESDAY, JULY 30

The ever-evolving Cape Fear River, with **Roger Shew**, lecturer in geology and environmental science.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6

Thalian Hall's next generation, with **Shane Fernando**, exective director, Thalian Hall Center for the Arts.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13

Speaker and topic to be announced.

MONDAY, AUGUST 19

Board of Directors meeting, 5:15 p.m., LS3P Architects conference room, 101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20

Safeguarding the region's water supply, with **Tim Holloman** of Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority.

Rotary news briefs

Induction banquet at art museum: Paul Lawler will take the gavel as the club's 2024-25 president on June 25. The annual banquet, at which new board members will also take office, begins with a cash-bar social hour at 6 p.m. at Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St. For members, the banquet has been paid for through our dues. Guests are invited at \$65 each. Registration is online, through the personalized link that has been emailed to each member.

Club assisting another Ukrainian family: The Wilmington East Rotary Club is helping a fourth family of war refugees to settle here, and is working to raise \$25,000 to cover air fare and three months living expenses. Our club is contributing \$10,000 to help the family's transition to American life. Individual contributions are also welcome: *https://www.gofundme.com/f/nadiia-boitsova*

Barlow to be area governor: Past President Cathy Barlow has been elected an assistant district governor for Rotary District 7730, responsible for the six clubs, including this one, in the district's Area 3. Retired as UNC-Wilmington's provost, Cathy was our president for 2018-19.

Rotary 101 to move online: By summertime, sessions of our popular "Rotary 101" course will be recorded and accessible through the club's website. R.B. Richey, Janet Monterose, and Cathy Barlow are working with Tyler Wooden and John Meyer to get this project under way.

Monthly blood drive continues: Rotarians are invited to give blood to the Red Cross through regular donation days at Independence Mall sponsored by this and other area Rotary Clubs. Recent dates were March 21, April 25, and May 23. Next will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 27.

Deliquent dues create cash-flow crunch for club: President Nancy Bullock informed the club on May 21 that the club's operating fund, supplied entirely from member dues, may face a deficit for this fiscal year. Noting that money raised through our Leaders in Service fund-raiser can't be used for club operations, she urged all members to make sure their dues payments are current.

Fourteen attend District Conference: A respectable delegation of our members attended the annual District 7730 conference on April 19-21 at the Hotel Ballast. Led by Past President Dale Smith, some of our 14 attendees staffed a table that provided Rotarians from other clubs with information about our projects.

District Foundation now tax-exempt: The Rotary District 7730 Foundation received tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) at the end of 2023. That required an update of its constitution and bylaws, which were approved April 19 at the District Conference. This added a new Rotary 7730 Areas of Focus Fund to the existing Disaster Relief Fund. The new fund will enable the district to raise money to address non-disaster needs in the state's southeastern region.

Board of Directors Meeting Get In Touch

5:15 pm, 3rd Monday of each MonthLS3P Architects conference room101 N. Third Street, Fifth FloorWilmington, NC 28401

President Nancy Bullock 910-262-7633 President-Elect Paul Lawler 910-409-2425 Secretary Elliott O'Neal 910-397-3613 Newsletter Editor John Meyer 910-297-7251 Webmaster John Meyer 910-297-7251

Submit News Items

Send photos or other information for the newsletter to jmeyer1@ec.rr.com. Please include all pertinent details: names, dates, etc.

Website

www.WilmingtonRotaryClub.org