

MARGE DERBY HONORED

Chamber honors her with 'Lifetime Achievement Award'

By JEFF BENZIGER

Editor of the

CERES (CALIF.) COURIER

Marge Derby's decades of service to the community and her passion to make life better for others prompted the Ceres Chamber of Commerce to award her the "Citizen of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award" during Friday's 53rd annual Ceres Community Service Awards & Installation Dinner."

The event also gave the Chamber an opportunity to install new Chamber board members for the new year.

Scott Siegel, the 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, introduced Derby as one who "gives our community a heartbeat and reminds us of our history. She has continued to advocate for those less advantaged than others. Her work at the Red Shield providing services and resources to the youth in our community is extraordinary.

"Marge is a consistent advocate for others. Her passions include the elderly as well as the disabled as her son Steven required assistance navigating his educational journey. She has given of herself from her early years as her family's history is part of our community today. Marge Derby is the person you call when you need help and resources. She is a strong advocate for those who don't have a voice as well as an educator who looks past one's disabilities to help them achieve success. She has continued her passion in the community and still volunteers to this day for the programs we so enjoy."

Derby has served faithfully on the Salvation Army Red Shield Center Board in south Modesto and has been engaged heavily in fundraising. Marge started a scholarship fund in memory of her late son Steven to provide scholarships to current or former Red Shield program youth.

She has been active in the Community Branch of behalf of the Red Shield

Advocate for elderly community members, assisting them in connecting with services and resources.

As a retired Caswell School resource specialist, Marge served as strong advocate for her students, often providing aid and clothing to those and their families in need.

She continues to remain a constant supporter of disadvantaged families and financially struggling students.



Contributed to the Courier

Marge Derby, escorted by son David Derby of Oakdale, was honored as the "Citizen of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award" during Friday's 53rd annual Ceres Community Service Awards & Installation Dinner."

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ESSENTIALS

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OCCUPATIONAL OLYMPICS RETURNS

Central Valley
High School students
Amando Guajardo,
Miguel Torres





of the Soroptimist International of Ceres accepted a plaque bestowing the entire club with the "Volunteer of the Year" award.

Contributed to the C

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E A1

Always had a keen
ly helping those
helping many who
were then able to
es up to 'pay it
their own situa-
ed," Siegel read

ly, each Christ-
adopts" needy
provide meals and

een instrumental in
assisting the han-
cluding fundraising

for women." Today, there are about 30,000 members. There are five federations that make up Soroptimist International, which has clubs in more than 120 countries throughout the world.

Young Citizen of the Year
Gurmannel Bahia has been community and others minded, causing the Chamber to honor her as the "Young Citizen of the Year."

Bahia was noted as extremely dedicated to her academics, school and the community. She is involved in clubs on campus, is captain of the tennis team, and is president the Associated Student Body

Gurmannel Bahia was named the "Young Citizen of the Year" with Eileen Stokman (at left) and Herman Bhatti (at right).

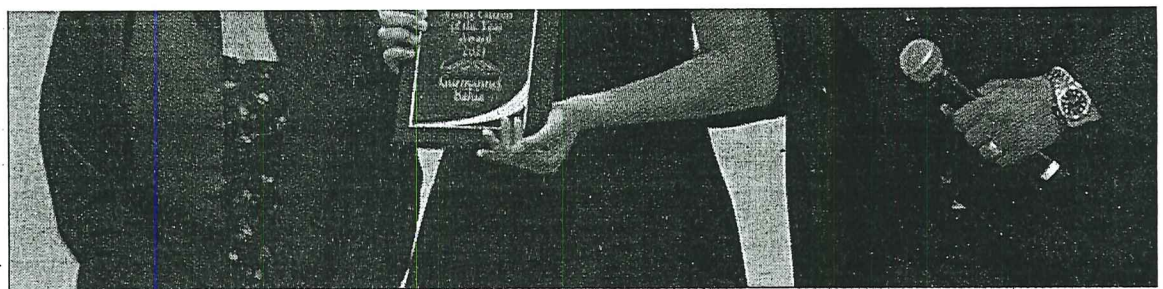


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 en a coordina-
 ual Ceres High
 of 1953 reunion
 es many of Ceres'
 ies.
Service Award
 Kim Parson,
 y give back to
 ty, whether it's
 vents at their
 spur the local
 o fundraise for
 ool district, or by
 d for events like
 ty Thanksgiving
 e Chamber's Ag
 ere bestowed the
 d Service Award.
 also helped
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 ruited Flawless
 wntown, and also
 er Brewing to
 nd location on
 owns in Merced.
 Kim holds down
 uns their multiple
 e provides the
 own lot for the
 garden, offers use
 Francisco cable
 ideo down

ity. She is involved in clubs
 on campus, is captain of the
 tennis team, and is president
 the Associated Student Body.
 Gurmannel's activities
 have not detracted from her
 academics; she has success-
 fully completed 3 Advanced
 Placement (AP) courses and
 is on her way to complete an
 additional four. She has main-
 tained a 3.8 GPA throughout
 high school and will continue
 pursuing her education after
 high school.
 Her community activities
 include membership in the
 Interact Club and assembling
 care packages for the less
 fortunate in Ceres and writ-
 ing appreciation cards for
 administration and staff. As a
 member of California Schol-
 arship Federation (CSF) she
 has sent holiday cards to resi-
 dents of the retirement homes.
 She has volunteered to hand
 out candy at the Trunk or Treat
 event. She has also served as
 a volunteer at Doctors Medi-
 cal Center, Sikh Temple of
 Modesto and at the Virginia
 Parks Fall Harvest Festival.
 She also worked on the G.S
 Bahia Toy Drive to collect and
 donate toys and clothing to 75
 kids each year.

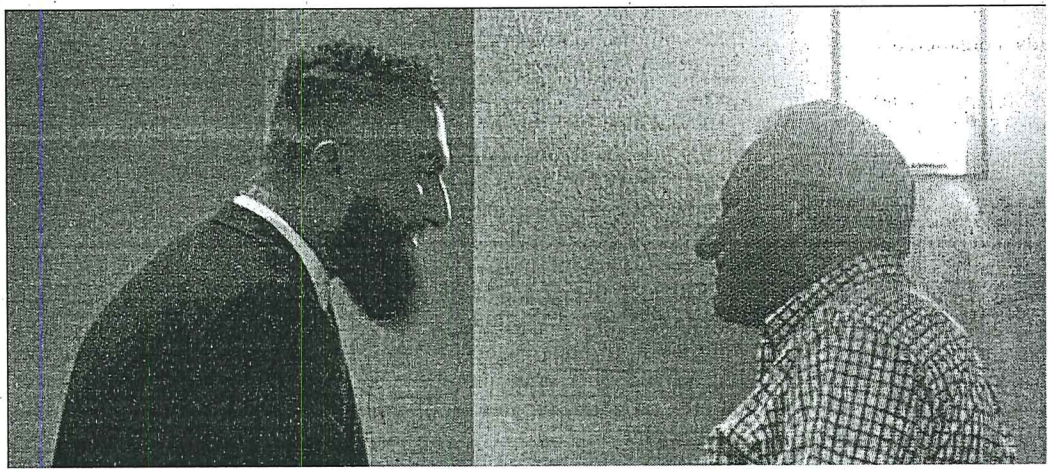
"Small Business of the Year"
 California Landscape Sup-
 ply of Ceres was honored as
 the "Small Business of the
 Year."
 In 2016, brothers Ryan
 and Nick Thornberry took
 over the family business,
 formerly known as By the
 Yard Concrete & Materials,
 and rebranded it to Califor-
 nia Landscape Supply. It has
 fast become one of the most
 impressive businesses in the
 region for landscaping needs.
 The family business started
 in the 1960s when Marshall
 Thornberry Jr. came to Ceres

Bhatti (at right).
 Contributed to
 the Courier



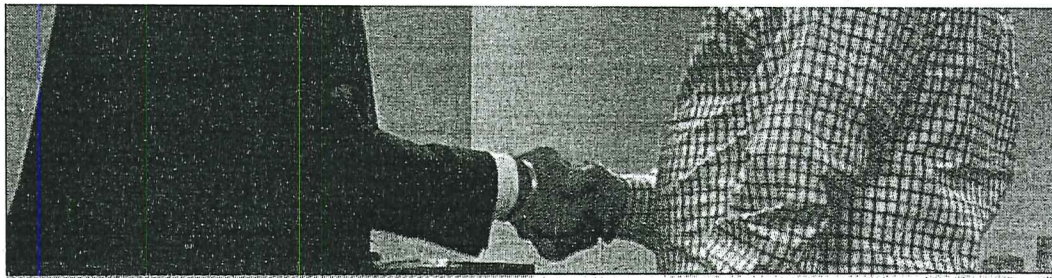
Daniel Martinez reads off a list of accomplishments of Nick and Ryan Thornberry as owners of California Landscape Supply. The business was given the "Small Business of the Year Award" by the Chamber.

Ted Smernes (right), owner of Ceres Drug store in downtown Ceres, accepted the Chamber of Commerce's "Legacy Award" from Herman Bhatti. The business has been operating on Fourth Street since the 1920s. Smernes continued with the



the 1920s. Smernes continued with the tradition starting in 1984.

Contributed to the Courier



in the 1900s when Marshall Thornberry Jr. came to Ceres and opened a concrete business that he passed down to son Ken. He operated D&L Concrete for over 20 years before handing the reins of the business over to his sons Ryan and Nick.

The business has grown into a full nursery with trees, shrubs, bark, topsoil, sand river rock, crushed gravel, sod and grass seed. They also sell turf, stone, pavers and ready-mix concrete by the yard.

Last October, the crew at California Landscape took time on their day off to give the children of Ceres Youth Baseball a better and safer field to play on. They also played a huge part in renovating the infield of John Thurman Field, home of the Modesto Nuts Minor League Baseball Team.

Large Business of the Year

Sunbelt Rentals is one of Ceres' larger employers and one of the city's top sales tax revenue generators, and was named "Large Business of the Year" for also giving back to Ceres as a corporation.

Sunbelt Rentals partners with the Gary Sinise Foundation and its R.I.S.E. (Restoring Independence Supporting Empowerment), First Res-

ponders Outreach, Snowball Express, and Avalon Network programs. Sunbelt supplies the necessary equipment for each of the R.I.S.E. program's projects to the contractors working on the home builds at no charge.

The company also donates a portion of rental proceeds from co-branded Gary Sinise Foundation equipment and organize various localized fundraising efforts to help positively impact the lives of deserving defenders, veterans, first-responders, their families and those in need.

Additionally, Sunbelt Rentals and the American Red Cross share a passion for assisting with relief efforts in times of need. On top of financial donations to the Red Cross, Sunbelt Rentals often sends equipment to affected areas from locations throughout the country, to aid in relief efforts and to help stricken communities rebuild.

Sunbelt Rentals has been generous with local non-profits with donations and is a great resource to businesses throughout the Valley.

Legacy Award

The Legacy Award, which recognizes individuals and/or businesses that have contributed through service, support or volunteer efforts, to the Ceres community for more than 40 years, went to Ceres Drug Store.

The business has been a mainstay in downtown Ceres for generations, providing prescriptions and personal amenities since the 1930s. The business began in the 1920s by J.D. Anderson at the corner of Lawrence and Fourth streets, (now occupied by Steps Dance Art Studio). It was sold to Claude and Jean McKnight in the 1930s. During the 1940s, the corner drug store, with its old-fashioned soda fountain, was a very popular gathering place. Back then, the drug

store sold magazines, newspaper, candy, cosmetics and cigarettes – until they were considered harmful.

The drug store eventually relocated to its current location on Fourth Street and eventually turned-over to Roger Strange. In 1984, Strange sold the business to Ted Smernes, who was then at Payless Pharmacy. His wife, Debra, has worked side-by-side managing the store and offering a wide array of unique and beautiful gifts, fashion, and decor. They still offer free gift wrapping on purchased gifts.

In 2005, Ted's oldest son, Derek, joined his father as a pharmacist and younger son, Justin, joined the family-owned business in 2008 after earning his license as a pharmacist.

New board installed

The 2022 Ceres Chamber Board of Directors and staff recognized at the event were: President Brandy Meyer; Past

President Herman Bhatti; Vice President Daniel Martinez; Treasurer Donna Lambert; Parliamentarian Paul Huck; directors Rajinder Bhuller, Kelly Cerny, Rahil Chadha, Jason Chapman, Vick Seck and Eileen Stokman; City of Ceres Liaisons Christopher Hoem and Anthony Sims; Ceres Unified School District Liaison John "Jay" Simmo; Auditor/Controller John "J" Curtis; Executive Director Renee Ledbetter; and Chamber office assistants Beth Stochl and Amy Medina.

Eric Ingwersen emceed event. Mark Whitehead delivered the invocation, with moment of silence to remember the late Pastor Adrian Condit.

Those who attended dinner on food catered by American Italian Bistro (formerly Pa Pronto) of downtown Ceres.

Music entertainment was provided by Rick & Jeff featuring LaVonne.