

South county superstars

• Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce honors outstanding achievers at annual dinner

BY TIMES STAFF



PHOTO COURTESY GSCC

Left to right – Pete Conklin, Mike Doherty and Officer Lane Leisey were among those honored Dec. 8 at the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner.

If you don't know Pete Conklin, it's not because he isn't trying.

The owner of Personal Affairs Management is a volunteer's volunteer, sporting a list of more than 15 local organizations he has spent time, talent and legal tender to better the Greater Springfield community. For his dedication to his community, Conklin is this year's recipient of the prestigious Herb Hunter Citizen of the Year.

Conklin was one of three award recipients at the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner on Dec. 8, which also featured the swearing in of 2017 Chamber Chairman Meghan Snyder of Meghan Snyder Communications, four

other board members to three-year terms, and – for the first time – entertainment from local comedienne Angela Moore.

Others recognized by the Greater Springfield Chamber for their community dedication were Fairfax County Police Officer Lane Leisey from the Franconia Station, who was awarded for Public Service, and Fairfax Memorial, recipient of the Arthur E. Morrisette Top Hat Service Award.

Conklin enjoys volunteering at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum and has been known to offer private tours if someone isn't able to come in during normal hours. Fridays are dedicated to Hospice, where he either drives a patient to an appointment for treatment or gives respite to the family by staying with the

patient in their home. He drives for The Shephard Center, taking those who can't drive anymore to doctor's appointments or events. He recently joined the Community Emergency Response Teams and already has jumped in to help raise money in support of first responders. While his business is to help families with their finances, he specializes in senior care and has been known to help families with his knowledge and not charge them for this service. That's just a sampling of the hard work and dedication to our community that earned Conklin this year's prestigious Herb Hunter Citizen of the Year award.

Fairfax Memorial Park, a 128-acre cemetery, and the Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home and Crematory are two family-owned, service-oriented businesses centrally located in the heart of Fairfax County and serving the Greater Springfield community. Michael H. Doherty serves as the third-generation President of Fairfax Memorial. It's fitting, therefore, that the grandson of the award's namesake and third-generation CEO of family-owned Interstate Van Lines, Bud Morrissette, nominated Fairfax Memorial for the 2016 Arthur E. Morrissette Top Hat Service Award. The cemetery was established in 1957 on a parcel of farmland adjacent to Braddock Road. The cemetery grounds are meticulously cared for, and many members of our community visit the property to take walks and enjoy the serenity of the park. The funeral home opened in the summer of 2003. From its inception, Fairfax Memorial has served people from all faiths and nationalities with dignity and with the understanding of the diverse funeral traditions found in our local community. The men and women who work at Fairfax Memorial are driven by a common motivating belief that they are called to serve in the funeral industry and to serve the needs of the bereaved. Its mission statement affirms its purpose of meeting the needs of families with honor, care, and service.

On May 21, 2016, officers were dispatched to a 911 call from a cell phone with no confirmed location within the Brookfield Plaza in Springfield. PFC Leisey was first on the scene. By then, dispatchers had narrowed the call to Dubai Jewelers. Leisey's training kicked in and he parked in such a way that his cruiser blended in with other vehicles. Glare prohibited him from seeing into the store, so Leisey moved to a better vantage point, behind vehicles for cover and directly in front of the business. The robber came out of the front of the store, saw Leisey and immediately opened fire in a crowded and busy shopping center on a Saturday afternoon. Leisey dove for cover and from his ground position returned fire. One of the suspect's rounds struck an innocent bystander who was in a vehicle driving through the shopping center. Leisey and the suspect continued to exchange gunfire until the suspect was able to drive away. The suspect and his accomplice were captured several days later, but Leisey's actions that day saved the lives of many more potential victims who were present all throughout the shopping center. Without regard for his own safety, Leisey went beyond the call of duty putting himself at risk and demonstrated bravery in an instant without delay. For that, he was awarded the Chamber's Public Service Award.