
Munroes honoured by County of Lanark

Two well-known citizens were presented with this year's Lanark County Awards of Excellence at a special ceremony during council Wednesday evening. Gordon and Ann Munroe, of Tay Valley Township, received the award for agriculture, business, industry and tourism.

In his address, Warden Al Lunney noted the Munroes are "renowned for pulling together one of the largest events Lanark County has seen," which was Rural Expo 2003-the Lanark County International Plowing Match and Farm Machinery Show.

"The Munroe's put together a spectacular showcase for the County of Lanark, which not only featured our agricultural foundation, but served to highlight a vibrant business and industrial community and the fact that, on the whole, we are great neighbours – with an awesome backyard."

This is the third year for the awards program, which recognizes recipients for contributions to the county at large or in at least two municipalities. It was developed to say thank you to citizens of Lanark County, to provide community recognition and visibility, to support citizens for their contributions and to inspire further community service.

The Munroes were nominated by Lynda Foster and Bud MacMillan, who were vice-chairs of Rural Expo 2003. They led a team of 1,000 volunteers to host the highly successful event through its conception in 1998 until 2004, when more than \$500,000 in proceeds were distributed mostly to county health centres, and also to service clubs and organizations.

Mr. MacMillan and Ms. Foster, in their nomination letter, said the team organized by the Munroes brought about a successful event that left a legacy to the community while strengthening it and instilling knowledge of and pride in the county. "We believe that they have made a contribution to the community of Lanark County which excels most and that the legacy they leave this community is one which will be felt by the business/agriculture/industry/tourism sectors for years to come."

The Munroes purchased Munlaren Farm in Drummond Township in 1973, where they raised two children. They were both progressive teachers at various county schools and went on to leadership roles before retiring: Mr. Munroe a vice-principal and Mrs. Munroe a vice-principal and principal. They retired from farming in 2006 and now reside in Tay Valley Township near Perth.

They are avid volunteers. Mr. Munroe has held all executive positions on the Lanark County Federation of Agriculture, has been a director on the Lanark County Plowmen's Association, has been involved with Friends of the Tay Watershed group and the Probus Club of Perth and has acted as provincial delegate for Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation.

Mrs. Munroe is a member of the Second Line Women's Institute and was a charter member and held leadership positions with the Lanark County Women's Network. She is a director of the Perth and District Community Foundation and the Children's Aid Society of Lanark County and the Town of Smiths Falls and is involved with many other organizations.

Several letters of support were submitted for the nomination. John Jordan, executive director for Lanark Health and Community Services, listed a myriad of local volunteer organizations supported by Ann and credited her commitment to these causes.

"I have witnessed the success of generations of students and new community leaders that have been influenced by Ann and Gordon as teachers and I am aware of the high regard that other members of this community have for both of them," said Ray Timmons, executive director of Almonte General Hospital and Fairview Manor. He said the financial legacy gifts from Rural Expo are being used in the redevelopment project at AGH and the new nursing home.

Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital CEO Michel Gagné said the Munroes' commitment through Rural Expo to community health care is unmatched. "Our gift of \$90,000 was directed towards our \$1.5 million fundraising campaign and the purchase of a new x-ray machine – an item that has and will continue to assist many residents of Lanark County."

Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital President and CEO Todd Stepanuik echoed these sentiments. “The communities of Perth, Smiths Falls and the surrounding area were all touched by the decision to commit a portion of the plowing match proceeds to local health care. If actions speak louder than words, then the Munroes are excellent candidates for this award and the perfect recipients of this honour.”

The Munroes thanked council and their supporters. “We will treasure this award for many years,” Mrs. Munroe said. “When we talk about ‘community’ this is what it is all about....We have been very blessed in our lives and our lives have been increased by our involvement in the community.”

Mr. Munroe called Rural Expo the highlight of their lives. “It was a privilege to participate in an event that raised a legacy.”

The Munroes received an individually designed award commissioned by Mississippi Mills-area artist Stephen Braithwaite, who also created the stained glass windows in the council chambers. They will be recognized on a plaque in the county administration building, as well as on the county website at www.county.lanark.on.ca and in notices in local newspapers.

Last year’s recipients were Ken and Freda Fournier, who received the award for volunteerism.

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For more information, please contact:
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Digital photos are available upon request at clerk@county.lanark.on.ca .