

Washingtonian 2008

The Washingtonian Award, established in 1961, recognizes one local resident for his/her service to the Washington community. The nominee must have resided in the Washington area (61571 zip code) for 5 years or more and have contributed to the welfare of the community, outside of their business profession. The winner of this award will be an individual with a history of unselfish service and commitment to the community.

The Washingtonian Award for 2008 is to be shared by a couple of people who have many attributes in common. Both recipients have lived in Washington their entire life. They represent some of the very traits that make our city so solid. They care about our city and those who live and work here. They have vision as well as the ability to work tirelessly through the challenges that come with turning a vision into reality. They are often part of the quiet force behind city-wide growth and expansion. They know and are known by many, which means they are good at understanding the “pulse” of the city. They are both part of numerous committees and volunteer groups. They are people who feel strongly that it is their responsibility to give back to a community which has given them so much. They represent the very heart of what makes Washington a great place to live and work. They are shining examples of devotion to their faith, their jobs, and active members of their community and their church. They are the type of people who will watch a house while someone is on

vacation, who will arrange to have their neighbor's yard mowed, who will bring meals for homebound friends, or who will simply feed someone's cat—always with a smile and a kind word. They serve quietly and with humility—neither asking nor expecting anything in return. Tasks and responsibilities can be delegated to them with the confidence that they will be carried out in a timely and professional manner. They are both members of the Rotary Club—willing to do whatever is needed, whether it be to take a leadership role or “work in the trenches”. They are considered to be leaders, consensus builders, organizers, hard workers, and believers in the people of Washington.

The 2008 recipients have all this in common as well as having shared almost 56 years together as husband and wife. They have raised their children in this wonderful community they love, and are watching as their grandchildren and great-grandchildren are brought up here, too.

Glenn and Pat Essig are the epitome of what it means to be true Washingtonians. Just give them a vision of what will make their hometown better and watch them make it a reality. Someone said, “All one has to do is merge Pat's spirited drive with Glenn's helping hands”...and you have a dynamo couple. Together they are the glue that holds projects together.

This beautiful Five Points complex is just one testimony of their tenacity. What started as a vision of a small \$3,000,000 community center has evolved into the reality

of the biggest undertaking in Washington's history—this \$21,000,000 complex we're now enjoying. Pat was involved from the beginning with a vision of a nice building where groups could meet, where weddings and receptions could be held, where kids could meet for recreation. It evolved into the reality of a five-entity complex involving the Washington Area Community Center, Washington Community High School, Washington District Library, Washington Park District, and the City of Washington. She never wavered in her determination to help accomplish this goal. She served as President of the Board of Directors from 1997 until December 2004, and is still on the Board. Pat led the Washington Area Community Center through its earliest organizational struggles. Her dedication and energy were evident as the WACC acquired land and sought funding for the cost of construction. She presided over weekly 7:00 am board meetings as well as innumerable meetings and negotiating sessions leading to the inter-governmental agreements between the five entities. While negotiating with other entities, seeking the support of charitable and civic groups or donations from individuals, she never swayed in her belief that the center would be a success. Ground was broken in October 2003. Four years later, the facility was completed and the Grand Opening was celebrated on October 12, 2007, with Pat front and center at the ribbon cutting.

One nominator said, "Pat Essig has been the angel that has kept this thing afloat. She is really the driving force that kept this project alive." Pat defers all credit from herself to others by explaining, "it has been a group effort"..."no one

person can ever take all the credit for this project...And now it is the community's project.”

Glenn has been at Pat's side through these many long years of hard work. He has helped in more ways than anyone knows—volunteering to help at every WACC event, hauling furniture (TVs and air conditioners), fundraising, and cheering Pat on. Without him, Pat probably would not have been able to accomplish what she has. While he is a somewhat private individual, Glenn's quiet demeanor does not disclose the active, involved person that silently goes about his way doing good for others.

Glenn and Pat have been long-time active members of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. Their knowledge of the congregation and the community, along with their organizational and planning skills, were real assets as they served as co-chairs for the church's 130th anniversary celebration in May, 2005. Glenn is currently serving on the Mission Endowment Committee as treasurer. He has been an influential member of the committee and is highly regarded.

Both of them have been in Rotary for many years. They often volunteer for projects and activities while many others lower their head when help is asked for. Glenn has brought more new members into Rotary Club than anyone else can remember; which in the end benefits the community, because as our civic organizations grow larger, they are more capable of doing more good for everyone.

Family and fishing are two very important aspects of the Essig's lives. And they've combined these two loves through the years, providing their family and close friends with many wonderful memories. Glenn and Pat's commitment to their family is without compare. No task or request is too great or small; they are always there to help and lend a sympathetic ear—without a doubt, their family is everything to them. Each member of the family is treated with respect and cherished for who they are and yet encouraged to become all that they can. Glenn has been a realtor with WRC since 1983; followed by Pat in 1989. Those they work with at WRC Realtors are like family as well; and together they have worked on many community projects, including Habitat for Humanity and the WRC Realtor Challenge with WACC to raise over \$40,000 since 2003.

Glenn and Pat live by the principles they have successfully instilled in the children: “Do something because it's right, not for personal gain or recognition.” And “Be active in your community and help make it a better place to live.” And so it is a great privilege and honor to award the 2008 Washingtonian Award to two of Washington's most humble and civic minded residents.

I present to you our 2008 Washingtonians.... Glenn and Pat Essig.