Tribute to Women Honors Outstanding Leaders

Six Local Honorees Set To Be Recognized During YWCA Wheeling’s Annual Celebration

Six outstanding leaders are being honored at the YWCA’s annual Tribute to Women celebration Monday, April 28. The event begins at 5 p.m. at the YWCA building, 1100 Chaplin St.

Each year, Tribute to Women ceremonies are celebrated by YWCAs around the world in honor of the accomplishments of women in community service, business, the arts, education and many other areas.

The Tribute to Women celebration is one of the YWCA Wheeling’s primary fundraisers, supporting its programs. Tickets for the event are available for purchase; reservations are necessary. For more information, call the YWCA at 304-332-0511.

Lori Jones, executive director of the YWCA, said, “The heroes that we will celebrate and honor at the Tribute to Women have blessed our community by sharing their talents and time. The YWCA is honored to recognize the accomplishments of six women.”

This year’s honorees, all from Wheeling, are Kate H. Crosby, Jamie Crow, Marlene Midget, Kathy Shapell, Kathy Szafran and Dr. Dianna Vargo.

For 35 years, Crosby has worked for Ogilvy Institute where she has served as director of performing arts. She is a past member of the Wheeling Hall of Fame board, Bethany College Alumni Council, Russell Nesbitt Services Inc. and St. Matthew’s Church.

As an actor, Crosby has appeared in more than 30 movies and television shows and has been a guest artist in regional college and university productions. She has produced more than 300 productions and created numerous programs for Ogilvy Institute including dance, theater, tap, tastics and the Moscow Ballet.

Crosby was born in Hartford, Conn, spent her elementary years in Buffalo, N.Y., and her secondary years at St. Agnes School (now The Dohan Stewart School) in Albany, N.Y. She is a graduate of Bethany College and did graduate work in education at3ansas University in Buffalo. She is listed in Who’s Who in Executives and Professionals.

Crosby has taught in secondary schools in New York and West Virginia and has served as an adjunct instructor in theater at Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy, Wheeling Jesuit University and West Virginia Northern Community College.

“Kate has dedicated her adult life to helping young people and adults live a better life through the arts. She has made Wheeling a better place by creating and promoting the arts. A real gem of the community,” Cheryl Pompeo, Ogilvy Institute dance director, said of Crosby.

Crow has been executive director of Elmhurst, The House of Friendship, a senior assisted living residence in Wheeling, since 2006. She received an undergraduate degree from West Liberty State College in public service with an emphasis on social work and a master’s degree in social work from West Virginia University. She holds a level one national administrator certification from Senior Living University.

From 1991 to 2006, Crow served as executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Upper Ohio Valley Inc., covering an eight-county area in West Virginia and Ohio. Her dedication to expanding the program’s reach resulted in a 20 percent growth in matching volunteers with single-parent children. She was director of the outreach program at Crittenton Services and a child protective social worker for the West Virginia Department of Human Services.

Currently, Crow is a member of the board of directors of the West Virginia Assisted Living Association and a member of the Rotary Club of Wheeling. During her tenure, Elmhurst was named the West Virginia assisted living residence of the year in 2011.

She is a graduate of the former Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy and resides in Wheeling with her husband, Duwayne, and their two sons, Stephen and Matthew.

Midget, executive director of Northern Panhandle Head Start Inc., began her 30-year career with the agency in 1984, after receiving a degree from WVU. She later attended the Johnson & Johnson management fellowship program of the University of California-Los Angeles and a leadership program in ending discrimination at Howard University.

Midget is vice president of the West Virginia Head Start Association, vice president of the Early Childhood Advisory Council and a board member of the Juvenile Mediation Program, Gabriel Project and West Virginia Early Childhood Advocacy. She is also a member of the WVCA board of directors, YWCA treasurer, Ohio County Family Resource Network, NAACP of the Upper Ohio Valley, Kiwanis Club of Wheeling and is a graduate of the Junior Achievement Leadership Program.

The Wheeling native is married to Tim Midget and has two children, Timothy All of Wheeling and Paige Jean-Ann of Pittsburgh, and three grandchildren. A lifetime member of Wayman A.M.E Church, Wheeling, she was previously a member of the board of trustees, church finance office and currently serves as an usher.

Shappell is the founder of the Augusta Levy Learning Center, the first evidence-based autism treatment program in West Virginia, where she has served as executive director since 2005. The center provides intensive early intervention to young children with autism, with two-thirds of the graduates transitioning successfully to regular education classrooms. In 2012, the center was recognized as one of “55 Good Things about West Virginia” by The State Journal.

She has been active on the state and national levels advocating for autism rights and is a founding board member and the first president of Mountaineer Autism Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring early diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders and access to evidence-based treatment for all children in West Virginia.

The Center, a nonprofit, was created, published and edited the educational “Autism Spectrum Disorder Almanac” through 2006. She has been an education columnist for The Intelligencer Wheeling News-Register and a professional development provider of Bethany College and West Liberty University. Shaapel is on the board of the environmental education committee of Ogilvy Institute, vice president of the Wheeling Academy of Law and Science and a member of Rotary, P.E.O. and the Women’s Giving Circle.

In 2006, Shaapel was awarded the Alumni Achievement Award by her alma mater, Bethany College. In 2010, she earned the Champion for Children Award from the Week of the Young Child. She lives in Wheeling with her husband, Irvin Shaapel, and their children, Hannah Fuller and Sam Fuller.

Vargo has a degree in psychology from West Virginia University in 1993 and a doctorate in educational leadership from WVU in 2009.

Vargo began her teaching career at Bishop McMeen High School in McMechen and at West Liberty State College before entering the Ohio County school system in 1983 as a math teacher at Wheeling Park High School. During her time at Park, she coached cross country and track. She later served as an assistant principal and, in 2001, she was named principal of Wheeling Park.

In 2005, she was selected as assistant superintendent of Ohio County Schools and served in that position until the summer of 2009, when she was appointed deputy superintendent. She was named superintendent in July 2012.

In 2001, Vargo joined the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference as an executive board member and, in 2007, she assumed the role of OVAAC executive. In addition to serving on the OVAAC executive board, Vargo currently serves on the boards of Ogilvy Institute, Salvation Army, Easter Seals, Wheeling YWCA and Wheeling Hospital. She is a member of the Catholic Church.