

Heart of the Community

Loving Hearts, Helping Hands

🕒 01.15.17

Nine local "unsung heroes" Heritage First Bank, David Mathis, Joe Montgomery, Jim Powell, Pamela Roberts, Kristen Sheeley, Mary Hardin Thornton, Tashia Ingram Twyman and Board of Governor's Honoree, Dr. Richard Dixon have been selected as the recipients of the 2017 Heart of the Community Awards of Honor. The nine honorees will be recognized on Feb. 18, 2017 at the 31st annual "Affair of the Heart." The theme for this year is again "Loving Hearts, Helping Hands." These awards are sponsored each year by Redmond Regional Medical Center and produced by the Heart of the Community Board of Governors.

Dr. Richard Dixon grew up on a farm in Blackshear. He graduated from Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College and then received a B.S. and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree from the University of Georgia.

Dr. Dixon served in the United States Air Force Veterinary Corps and was stationed at Kusan Air Force Base in South Korea and then at Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

His Civic and community activities have and do include:

- Exchange Club of Rome
- Exchange Club Family Resource Center Board
- Coosa Valley Fair Association
- Flower Show Chairman Coosa Valley Fair
- Floyd County Animal Control
- Floyd County Board of Health
- Rome City Schools Board of Education
- Floyd County Master Gardener
- Floyd County Retired Teachers
- Peach State Marching Band Festival
- First United Methodist Church
- Board of Trustees Reinhardt College
- Northwest Georgia Veterinary Medical Association

He and his wife, Mary Louise are the parents of two children, Beth and Charles and they have four grandchildren.

Those nominating Dr. Dixon say "For 40 years he has made a significant impact in so many areas of Rome and Floyd County through his volunteer service and his veterinary practice."

A 1976 graduate of Pepperell High School, David attend Floyd College (now Georgia Highlands College). He currently serves as Program Manager/Assistant Athletic Director at Georgia Highlands College.

His community services activities have included:

- Floyd Parks and Recreation Board
- Foundation Camp at Georgia Highland College
- NAIA National Football Host committee
- Tournament director Georgia Highs School Association
- Floyd Schools business Partner of the Year
- Recreation Authority Horace Anthony Award
- Georgia Highlands college alumni Award
- Organization Advisor of the Year
- Georgia Highlands Staff Community Involvement Award
- Georgia Highlands President's Meritorious Award
- Served on Floyd Land Bank Authority
- Restoration Lindale Board of Directors

During his tenure on the Authority board, he was instrumental in the transition of Rome Floyd Parks and Recreation form an authority to county control.

Each year he secures funds for the Foundation Camp which was created with a partnership with Georgia Highlands and 100 Black Men of Rome-Northwest Georgia. The camp serves boys 10-16 years of age and serves those who are considered "at risk." Many of those who have participated return each year and go on to attend Georgia Highlands College.

Through his efforts as Tournament Director of the Georgia High School Association the college raised \$200,000 for scholarships to non-traditional students at GHC.

David is married to Kathy Mathis and they have three children, Brooks, Ryan and Rachel.

One of the many who nominated David said of him "If David had his way, we would have never known about his good deeds and would never have brought them to your attention. By accident or otherwise, we must celebrate the excellence that David stands for and delivers ease."

Mary Hardin Thornton graduated from West Rome High School in 1987 and from Huntington College in Montgomery, Alabama. She received a B.S. Degree in English, Religion and Philosophy.

She currently serves as the Director of Keep Rome Floyd Beautiful where she works to engage the citizen of Rome and Floyd County to take greater responsibility for improving community environment by preventing litter, reducing waste and becoming more involved in community improvement projects.

Her civic and community activities have included:

- Clean Community Commission
- St. Mary's Catholic Church
- Rome Rotary Club
- Hospitality House for Women Board
- Georgia Arbor Organization
- Director of Neighborhood Sustainability
- Georgia Urban Forest Council
- Paradise Garden Foundation
- South Rome Community Garden
- Network Day Services Board
- Coosa District Civic Service, Boy Scouts of America
- Heart of the Community Foundation Board
- Junior Service League
- Leadership Rome
- TRED (Trails for Recreation and Economic Development)

She and her husband, Billy, have been married 20 years and have two sons, Wyatt and Henry who attend St. Mary's School.

Her nominators are quick to indicate her infectious enthusiasm and the service she gives to this community.

A native of Rome and a graduate of Rome High School, Kristen Sheeley received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology from the University of Georgia.

Current and previous community service includes:

- While in high school, Kristen worked with Habitat of Humanity in Poland, Utah and Washington State
- She was also a member of the Rome Domestic Violence Task Force
- Hospitality House Thrift Store
- Volunteer Coordinator for Women of W.O.R.T.H. Women's Clinic

— Volunteer in Cusco, Peru

Kristen works tirelessly to promote the clinic and bring attention to the problems of the uninsured in the areas. She also works very closely with other local service agencies to increase meaningful access to health care. She has developed an extensive volunteer programs that works with local colleges and high schools to allow their nursing and other students to experience the joy of a volunteer experience.

According to Marilyn Ringstaff, " Kristen is a compassionate and motivated young women who is committed to assisting people."

A native of Rome and a graduate of Coosa High School, Jim's work career began following his graduation from Carson Newman College with Floyd Medical Center in behavioral health services but evolved into healthcare management and business development. Jim also received his Master's Degrees in Counseling from West Georgia College and Healthcare Administration from Mercer University.

Following his 20-plus years in healthcare, he has been Director of Economic Development with Georgia Northwestern Technical College since 2000.

His community service has included the following:

— Rome Jaycees Past Board member

— Drug Free Community Task Force member

Just Say No to Drugs Campaign

— St. Mary's School Past Board member & Sports Boosters Club Past Chairman

— Rome Junior Golf Association member

— Coosa Valley Tennis Association member

— Coosa Valley Mental Health Past Board member

— Regional Chambers of Commerce member

— St. Mary's Catholic Church Youth Group volunteer

— Friends of the Theatre at Shorter College member

— Rome High Chorus Booster Club Past Chairman

— Rome Little Theatre Past Board member

— Knights of Columbus Grand Knight & Labor Day Barbeque Chairman

— United Arts Collaborative member

— Rome Kiwanis Club Past Board member

— Historic DeSoto Theatre Foundation Board member

— Rome Downtown Development Authority member

— Rome Celebrity Dance Challenge contestant

Jim's earlier efforts with area schools, sports and youth organizations, coupled with his involvement with local mental health organizations and the Knight of Columbus, helped influence his work toward "service to others."

HDTF was formed to enable the ongoing work to restore and sustain the theatre, bringing it back to its prominence as the Jewel of Broad St. and Rome's premier performance/community venue. The results of these efforts, including additional programming through concerts, children's shows and community events, has helped raise the needed funds to continue theatre improvements for RLT, future generations and all of Rome to enjoy.

Jim and his beautiful wife, Cathy, who is happily retired from the Floyd County School System, are proud of their children, Tripp (Brittany) and Melissa (Todd) and two "perfect grandchildren," Mary James and Daniel.

Teresa and Brian Resch say of Jim "Whether he's out front on-stage or out in the community, playing his guitar, cooking barbecue, selling peaches, or behind the scenes doing some of the dirty work, even changing the marquee..... he does it with a smile on his face, enjoying his family and friends and having fun."

An adopted son of Rome and a native of Lake City, Florida, Joe Montgomery has been at Darlington School since 2004 and is the Assistant Head of School for Strategic Initiatives and previously served as Chief Advancement Officer. Prior to joining Darlington, he was the Senior Vice President of Private Client Services at SunTrust Bank and Vice President for University Relations at Shorter University.

Joe has served in numerous capacities on local, state and regional boards and committees. His enthusiasm and abilities have often led to his being chosen for leadership roles. He has provided "pro bono" consulting services in fundraising, strategic planning and board development for numerous local non-profit organizations.

— Serves on the South Rome Redevelopment Agency and Corporation Boards

— Chairs the scholarship fundraising committee for the Early Learning Center at Anna K. Davie Elementary School

— Serves on the Private Colleges and Universities Authority

— Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce Board and serves on the Board of Directors of the Georgia State Chamber of Commerce

— Served as Chairman of the Board of Georgia Conservancy currently on the Advisory Board

— Leadership Georgia's Class of 1999

— Leadership Georgia Board of Trustees Received the Fred Kerr Award for enthusiastic and support of Leadership Georgia on a continuing and consistent basis.

— An Eagle Scout, he has been a lifelong volunteer for the Boy Scouts of America.

Joe and his wife, Rebekah, have three daughters and most recently became grandparents. They are active members of Rome First United Methodist Church. According to Dr. J. Paul Ferguson, "Joe Montgomery has been a quiet, behind the scenes advocate and supporter of many local activities and organizations."

Tashia Twyman received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Georgia State University and a Master's of Education Degree from Jacksonville, State University.

She has served as an instructor and tutor at several colleges and schools in the area.

Her community service does or has included the following:

- Darlington School Strategic Planning
- Community Kitchen Volunteer
- Open Door Home Board
- Rome Housing Authority
- Junior Service League
- Lovejoy Baptist Church
- Alpha Kapa Alpha Sorority — Rome Housing Authority

Daughter of Rev. & Mrs. Carey N. Ingram, she is married to Christopher P. Twyman and they have two children, Lauren Christa (11) and Myles Christopher (8).

Tashia was nominated by Rhonda Wallace, who says "Tashia's love for her community shows in her smile. She always goes the extra mile to make an event successful. She always shows up "Ready to Go."

A 1964 graduate of East Rome High School and a 1968 graduate of Auburn University, Pam has committed herself to this community through service oriented activities.

Those activities have included:

- Good Neighbor Ministries
- Chieftain's Museum and Plant Sale
- Junior Service League
- Keep Rome Floyd Beautiful — Rome Federated and Townview Garden Clubs
- Rome First United Methodist Church Soups Kitchen

— Georgia Master Gardner

— Tomato Sandwich Supper for Free Clinic

A Master Gardner, she has used her talents helping keep garden spots neat around East Central School and works with the residents at Winthrop Court on gardening projects. She has been a faithful worker at the Coosa Valley Fair Horticulture Show through staffing and judging.

Pam and her husband, Bill are the parents of two children, Jeremy and Jessica and 5 grandchildren. Those nominating Pam speak of her "Go To" personality and her commitment to the clients at Good Neighbor Ministries.

The mission statement for Heritage First Bank not only focuses on exceeding the expectations of their customers but to be an active corporate citizen in the community. The net result they hope will enhance the quality of life in the communities they serve.

Their employees can be found serving in various communities and on boards of agencies in the Rome community.

Some of those include:

— Seven Hills and Rome Rotary Clubs

— Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce

— Open Door Home Board

— South Rome Redevelopment Center

— Cancer Navigators

— YMCA

— Noon Optimist Club

— Exchange Club of Rome

— Trails for Recreation and Development (TRED)

— Kiwanis Club of Rome

— Community Kitchen

— Hospitality House for Women

— Salvation Army

— Rome-Floyd Commission on Children and Youth

— Worked with other banks to honor and recognize First Responders in Rome

They have sponsored fund raising events for:

— Historic Desoto Theatre Foundation

- Cancer Navigators
- Open Door Home
- Snickers Needs a Ride Truck Project
- South Rome Redevelopment Center

According to Robert Blumberg "Heritage First Bank has been a strong proponent of community involvement and will continue to play a leadership role."



Dr. Richard Dixon Board of Governors Award



Mary Hardin Thornton



David Mathis



Kristen Sheeley Young Heart Award



James D. Powell (Jim)



Joe Montgomery



Tashia Ingram Twyman



Pam Roberts



Heritage First Bank, Business Award