



April 20, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Aging Together's 5 Over 50 Celebration Climbing into it's 10th year this May

They act in theater, work out at the gym daily, play golf, fish, make jam, cook Italian food, and laugh with Steve Harvey. To describe them their communities use words like “involved, initiated, catalyst, organized, assisted, dedicated, lead, dignified, positive, quick-witted, humble”. If your vision of an adult anywhere from age 60-ish to 90 (yes, we said 90!) is someone sitting around feeling tired out, you haven't met any one of Aging Together's 5 Over 50 honorees for 2023.

Or for that matter, any of those honored in the last decade. This year marks ten years that Aging Together has pointedly put a spotlight on people in our region who defy the stereotypes relentlessly forced on the psyche of older adults. “That's 50 people”, says Ellen Phipps, Executive Director of Aging Together. “And that's just a very small fraction of those over the age of 50 in our five counties who are vibrant, hard-working change-makers, spirited and effective volunteers, and who play hard as well, challenging the gloom of ageism.” Aging Together seeks out nominations from each county in the fall of the previous year and encourages as many nominations as possible to be submitted. What started as a handful of submissions early on has grown to almost 30 this year. “Which is exciting because we are finding that more and more people in our region WANT to honor older adults, and because as the enthusiasm grows, more names come to us that we would never have known if someone didn't send in a nomination”, points out Phipps.

This year's five honorees have built up mountains of wisdom from fighting wars, teaching in schools, advocating for systems that improve mental health issues, and from years spent nursing people back to health and fighting for equality. Which has morphed into becoming advocates, fundraisers, community developers, board members, change-makers, creators, instructors, program managers, and stalwart supporters for families who lay their veterans to rest. “You just can't get their accumulated experience without the years they've lived. It would be a loss to our communities not to share that. It's been a great pleasure getting to know each one individually and an even bigger one being able to highlight them together”, says Phipps. “They truly make you proud of the region and the good hands it's in.”

Phipps emphasizes that Aging Together plans this signature celebration each year with the sole motivation of being intentional at disrupting ageism. In fact the event is purposely held in the month of May, which is Older Americans Month as proclaimed annually by the President of the United States since 1963. What better way to highlight the positive side of aging than to align the event at a time when there is national emphasis for involving the strength of older adults with their “power of connection and engagement in building stronger communities”. (acl.gov)

There’s lots more to tell about our local heroes and Aging Together is inviting attendance at one of four “watch parties” around the region. Each honoree was separately filmed earlier in the year which has been turned into a recorded montage by Culpeper Media Network. It will be presented at the watch parties along with live-screen commentary. Afterwards there will be plenty of time to toast and cheer on one’s favorite honoree with a complimentary food and wine reception for those who register in advance (since this is not a fundraiser event, attendees must register to assure proper planning with our sponsors). To do that one should go to www.agingtogether.org. Additionally, for those unable to attend a party, virtual viewing of the film will be available through Aging Together’s website that evening.

Event Specifics

Date: May 17, 2023

Time: 4:00-6:00pm (The program begins at 4:30.)

Venues:

Prince Michel Winery (Honoring Perry Smiley and Scott Bennett)

The PATH Foundation Resource Center, hosted by the Fauquier Chamber of Commerce (Honoring Darlene Kelly)

The Clubhouse at Lake of the Woods (Honoring Lee Frame)

Quievremont Winery (Honoring Barbara Adolphi)

For more details and to register: www.agingtogether.org

5 over 50 Honorees for 2023

Perry Smiley (Culpeper Honoree)

Perry Smiley is almost 90 years young, and he credits volunteering with helping him age well. He volunteers at the Culpeper National Cemetery, two senior centers, his church, and Culpeper Veterans of Foreign Wars where he started a hospital equipment loan center and provides honors each year to deceased veterans. Smiley served 26 years in the Marine Corps and he makes 200 to 300 jars of fruit jelly each year with his wife which they take to people in need.

Darlene Kelly (Fauquier Honoree)

Darlene Kelly has been a catalyst for positive change in her community as the Chair for the Education and Prevention Committee and leader of the Faith and Community Wellness stakeholders group, and she holds positions in many other service oriented organizations in Fauquier County. She is an active

participant in various outreach programs, particularly for older adults, and she was also a nurse for 30 years. She has a brightly positive outlook on life, and is a big Steve Harvey fan.

Scott Bennett (Madison Honoree)

Scott Bennet's positions as a board member for multiple community organizations and his service as a Naval officer for 28 years show how much he loves to give back to the people around him. When he sees the needs of others in Madison County, he is ready to assist and loves bringing joy to those he helps. He delivers food to people without ready access to it, and he assists many veterans in getting needed benefits. Bennet also organized a program which lends gently used medical equipment to members of his community. Serving others is at the core of who he is and what he does.

Lee Frame (Orange Honoree)

Lee Frame has served Orange County in many ways over the years, including through the Lions Club, Lake of the Woods Fire and Rescue, the Orange County Board of Supervisors, and the Lake of the Woods Players to name just a few. He also served in the Navy for 30 years, and as an EMT for 16 years. Even with all of these great things in his life, he says choosing his spouse was the best thing he's ever done.

Barbara Adolfi (Rappahannock Honoree)

Barbara Adolfi's love of hiking brought her to the Shenandoah National Park with her young children and friends 50 years ago. She purchased property in 1987. She retired after 25 years as a school social worker in 1998 and was full time in Rappahannock County. She was home! Barbara volunteered in activities that build community: She wrote the newspaper's Sperryville Column for 7 years, telling the story of people's lives and businesses. Volunteer with Sperryville Volunteer Rescue Squad and reorganized fund raising. She was a member of the Economic Revitalization Committee. She opened a vacation rental house, and co-chaired county PR events for tourism. She reopened her counseling practice. She was the catalyst for many social gatherings which created positive connections and activities between people. Many of her nominators for this award spoke of her ability to sincerely uplift and help individuals. from all walks of life. Despite her Parkinson's disease diagnosis, Barbara continues to be a strong community pillar many people love and respect.

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Photos Follow



Perry Smiley



Scott Bennett



Lee Frame



Darlene Kelly



Barbara Adolfi