

The President's Distinguished Community Leadership Award: Recognizing Those Who Change Us

By Amy Hasson

Salisbury University Chief of Staff
and Town-Gown Council Chair



What makes a community special, transforming its members daily in ways they may not even be aware?

When Sue Revelle co-founded the Women Supporting Women breast cancer support group in 1993, she saw it as a natural extension of her job working with cancer survivors in Peninsula Regional Medical Center's radiation unit. More than a decade and a half later, hundreds of women in six counties on the Eastern Shore have called it a lifeline.

"We're all connected in humanity through our need for one another," said Lewis R. Riley, a Parsonsburg farmer who served the people of Wicomico County, the Eastern Shore and Maryland for more than four decades. He earned a reputation for caring and fairness as a county councilman and a Maryland delegate and senator, and also served as Secretary of Agriculture under three governors from both political parties, championing policies to preserve farms and rural families.

Revelle, a Salisbury University alumna, didn't set out to do anything heroic, but her 15 years of commitment to the organization she helped start have touched more than 1,000 lives.

"Each day we're developing a heritage," said Riley. "We have to ask ourselves, is it one that we want to hand down?"

At Salisbury University, we believe in celebrating that kind of heritage. Revelle and Riley are the type of heroes who make a community special—ones whom we respect and want as neighbors and friends. They are the people SU President Janet Dudley-Eshbach seeks to honor with her President's Distinguished Community Leadership Awards, presented each May during Spring Commencement.

The award is given in two categories:

- organization
- individual

Women Supporting Women was the most recent organization to earn it, Revelle the most recent individual honoree. The first individual winner was Riley in 2007.

The Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore won the first organizational award. Celebrating its

25th anniversary this year, the foundation supports non-profit and community endeavors on the Lower Eastern Shore through grants and programs for youth as well as seniors, in areas such as the nursing shortage and other community needs. Last year the foundation presented more than 1,500 grants totaling some \$4.6 million.

"Believing that learning and service are vital components of civic life," the Salisbury University mission states that SU should actively contribute "to the local Eastern Shore community and the educational, economic, cultural and social needs of our State and nation." In honoring individuals and organizations such as Revelle and Riley, the University is able to not only say thank you to a community which has been remarkably generous to the campus, but to celebrate the honorees as exemplars of civic behavior and models of action for our students. It's win-win for all.

Nominations are currently open for this year's awards. All community individuals and organizations throughout the Lower Eastern Shore not affiliated with Salisbury University are eligible. Nomination applications for describing the nature and breadth of the individual or organization's contributions are available on the SU Web site at www.salisbury.edu/communityleadership.

Winners will be recognized on local television and their names engraved on a plaque in the President's Office.

Nomination applications and two letters of support may be sent to me by Monday, March 16, at:

Amy Hasson, Chief of Staff
President's Office
Salisbury University
1101 Camden Avenue
Salisbury, MD 21801
or e-mailed to
ashasson@salisbury.edu

One trait I've noticed in those I consider truly successful is "an attitude of gratitude." What better way to celebrate the bonds of town-gown than by saying "thank you" to those who have made a difference in our lives and our community?

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

www.salisbury.edu