

NEWS

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Two local seniors receive statewide honors for community service and caregiving



Elwood "Mike" Michaels of West Chester and Lorene Middleton of Union Township (Clermont County) will receive statewide honors this week in Columbus as part of the Ohio Department of Aging's celebration of Older Americans Month.

Michaels is among 12 exceptional people being inducted into the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. Middleton will be among 15 Ohioans to receive a Caregiver of the Year award.

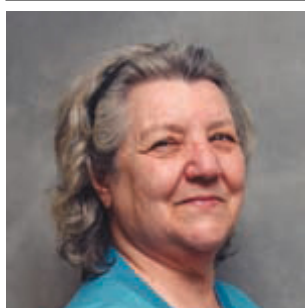
The ceremony will take place at the Capitol Theatre in Columbus from 2 to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 22.

Nominated by Denise Hinson and Carol Crawford of the Sharonville Community Center, Michaels has been called the "father" of chair volleyball. He became involved with the sport in 1999, designing and manufacturing equipment used in nursing homes and senior and community centers. In 2000, his invention set the equipment standard that was adopted by the Hamilton County General Health District. Since then, his designs have inspired similar equipment nationwide. He still services the equipment he manufactured.

Michaels also makes wooden toys for the annual Sharonville Fantastic Toy Shop and volunteers during the event, helping children build toys. He has been caregiver to his wife, who has multiple sclerosis, since 1985. Despite health concerns of his own, he takes her regularly to cultural events outside the nursing home where she lives.

According to his nominators, "Mr. Michaels' number one goal when he awakens in the morning is to make others happy."

Since 1977, more than 300 individuals have been inducted into the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. Native-born Ohioans or state residents for at least 10 years are nominated based on service to others and achievements after age 60 and for lifetime achievements that represent positive aging.



Lorene Middleton is caregiver for her husband, Namon, her son, Mike, and granddaughter, April. Due to mental illness and now, dementia, Middleton's husband has been unable to work since 1973. Since then, Middleton has held her family together, both emotionally and

financially, working full time while caring for three sons and her husband.

A series of tragedies led to even greater challenges for Middleton. Her granddaughter, whom she had adopted, became permanently disabled as a result of contracting encephalitis and meningitis. Her son suffered brain injury from a car accident.

Middleton never complains about her situation or feels sorry for herself, according to award nominator Marjorie Campbell, a care manager for Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio. "When asked about stress, she says, 'There's those worse off than me,'" Campbell said. "Lorene is a remarkable woman, who gives more of herself each day than most people give each year."

Statistics on Caregivers (From the Family Caregiver Alliance):

More than 1 million (1,140,348) Ohioans provide 1,222 million caregiving hours annually, at an annual market value of more than \$306 billion.

Ohio caregivers provide 80 percent of all long-term care services that would otherwise cost Ohio taxpayers more than \$12,118 billion each year.

34 million Americans (16 percent of the population) provide care to adults age 50 and older.

8.9 million caregivers (20 percent of adult caregivers) care for someone age 50 and older who has dementia.

The majority of caregivers are 35-64 years old.

Many caregivers of older people are also elderly. Of those caring for someone over 65, the average age is 63 years; one-third are in fair to poor health.

A significant portion of those in the workforce are also providing elder care to family members. Between 25 and 35 percent of all workers report that they are currently providing or have recently provided care to someone 65 or older.

Among baby boomer caregivers (aged 50-64 years old), an estimated 60 percent are currently employed.

"These special men and women exemplify the challenges faced by caregivers and the need to find ways to help family caregivers as our population ages," said Barbara Riley, director of the Ohio Department of Aging. "Most of our honorees expressed surprise at receiving an award. In their opinion, they were just doing what they would naturally do for their loved ones. "

About Council on Aging

Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio (COA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for older adults and their families.

Since 1974, COA has been designated by the state of Ohio as the Area Agency on Aging for Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton and Warren counties. COA plans, coordinates, funds and administers programs for an area that is home to more than 252,000 adults age 60 and older.

COA promotes choice, independence, dignity and well-being of older adults through a range of services that help them remain in their homes for as long as possible.

One call to COA links people to the wide variety of agencies, information and programs that serve older adults.

For Answers on Aging:

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