

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

Goleta's Finest named for community service

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Those who have made significant contributions to Goleta in the past year were honored Thursday night at the Bacara Resort & Spa.

The 64th annual Goleta's Finest Community Awards were handed out to individuals, businesses and nonprofit organizations selected by the Goleta Valley Chamber of Commerce.

"It is our Academy Awards of Goleta," said Kristen Miller, chamber president and CEO.

The winners, chosen from nominees by a committee and approved by the chamber's board of directors, were announced last month.

Peter Jordano of Jordano's Inc. was named Man of the Year, with Patricia Bragg of Bragg Health Products and Books is Woman of the Year.

Liz Barnitz, principal of El Camino School, was named K-12 Educator of the Year and Mike Panesis of UCSB is Higher Education Educator of the Year.

Alexis Flores, a senior at San Marcos High School, was awarded Student of the Year. Joan Rakowski of the Goleta Valley Historical Society was honored as Volunteer of the Year, while Anne Pazier, owner of Santa Barbara Gift Baskets, was named Entrepreneur of the Year.

Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital Foundation is Non-Profit of the Year, Montecito Bank & Trust is Large Business of the Year and The Frame-Up, a framing shop in the Calle Real Shopping Center, is Small Business of the Year.

More than 400 people were present to see the recipients accept their plaques and certificates.

"Even though we focus on business year-round, tonight we're not just going to focus on business," chamber board chairman Tony Vallejo said.

Montecito Bank & Trust President and CEO Janet Garufis, accepting the bank's award, praised all of the night's awardees.

"I'm so proud to be part of this extraordinary company of award winners," she said.

Ms. Garufis said that despite the name of the award, she does not see the 210-employee bank as a large business.

"We will always take care of our clients like we are a small business," she said.

Glenn Avolio, owner of The Frame-Up, had some helpful advice for his fellow winners.

"If you need a place to get those certificates framed, I know a place."

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Honorees at Goleta's Finest Community Awards, held Thursday at the Bacara Resort, are, back row from left, Pete Jordano, Mike Panesis, Michael Towbes, Larry Harter and Glenn Avolio. Front row from left, Janet Garufis, Joan Rakowski, Alexis Flores, Liz Barnitz and Ann Pazier

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