



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wayne County Foundation Names 2023 Award Winners

The Wayne County Foundation is pleased to announce the 2023 recipients of the Charles A. Rodefeld Award for Leadership in Philanthropy and Community and the Ruth J. Wickemeyer Award for Nonprofit Excellence. These are the highest recognitions that the Foundation bestows on Wayne County individuals and/or companies for their philanthropic service, including nonprofit support.

Two recipients were named for each award in honor of the Foundation's 45th Anniversary. They were surprised at events over the past week. They will be fully honored at the Foundation's Summer Celebration this July.

"It is a privilege to recognize individuals who have given time, talent and treasure to many organizations across Wayne County. Each recipient is an example of a true servant leader," shared Rebecca Gilliam, Wayne County Foundation Executive Director.

Sam Witherby, and Tom and Chris Hilkert were selected as the 2023 Charles A. Rodefeld Award winners. The Rodefeld Award recognizes philanthropic Wayne County citizens who move quietly and steadily to address community needs. Jenie Lahmann and Tom Alberts were selected as the 2023 Ruth J. Wickemeyer awardees. The Wickemeyer Award recognizes paid or volunteer nonprofit leaders who personify exceptional service to others in the name of community progress.

2023 Charles A. Rodefeld Awardees

Sam Witherby has been instrumental in advocating for local youth for several years. He joined the Board of Directors for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Wayne County in 1988 and helped raise thousands in funds for the organization. One of his notable achievements is establishing the First Tee Summer Golf Program in Wayne County, which teaches kids the basics of golf. Witherby was nominated by Richmond Columbian Properties.

Tom and Chris Hilkert are also passionate advocates for youth in Wayne County. The Hilkerts were instrumental in the Boys and Girls Clubs of Wayne County capital campaign to build the Richard E. Jeffers Unit by contributing and encouraging others to invest in the project. Chris is involved with the BGCWC's Board of Directors. Tom is noted for his work with Reid Health as the Governing Board Chair, Reid Health Foundation, and for his involvement with several committees. The Hilkerts were nominated by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Wayne County.

2023 Ruth J. Wickemeyer Awardees

Jenie Lahmann worked as the engagement manager at Morrisson-Reeves Library for 41 years. One of her largest impacts was building MRL's volunteer and donor base while assisting Friends of Morrisson-Reeves Library. Lahmann currently serves as the president of Civic Hall Associates and is a member of the Richmond Redevelopment Commission. She was nominated by the Friends of Morrisson-Reeves Library.

Tom Alberts has served on numerous local boards, including the Richmond Art Museum, Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Reid Health Foundation, IU East, Wayne County Foundation, and the Wayne County Historical Museum. His fundraising expertise has served numerous organizations and has led to millions of dollars in gifts. His philanthropic spirit has guided several local nonprofits towards financial sustainability. Alberts was nominated by the Richmond Art Museum.

“The individuals selected as recipients of the Rodefeld and Wickemeyer awards have all lived exemplary lives as servant leaders. In honor of the Wayne County Foundation's 45th anniversary, our Nominating & Governance Committee was thrilled to recommend these local leaders to our Board of Directors,” said Avis Stewart, Chair of the Nominating & Governance Committee.

“Given the significance of our anniversary and the qualities of the nominees, the Board enthusiastically approved our recommendation.”

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Since 1979, the Wayne County Foundation has existed to foster and encourage private philanthropic giving, to enhance the spirit of community, and to improve the quality of life in the Wayne County, Indiana, area now and for future generations.

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