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# 2016 Dexter Chamber Distinguished Citizen of the Year

JANUARY 31ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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**Dexter, Missouri** - The 2016 Distinguished Citizen of the Year was announced at the Dexter Chamber of Commerce annual banquet on Saturday, January 28, 2017.

"This years Distinguished Citizen is described as perhaps the hardest working "non-working" person in Dexter," stated Hillary Starnes, Executive Director of the Dexter Chamber of Commerce.

"She can be found working in countless capacities, not only within the immediate area, but across the county and the southeast Missouri region. She is an extraordinary planner and organizer and is perfectly willing to work behind the scenes with no fanfare or accolades."

Mary Ann Taylor is the 2016 Distinguished Citizen of the Year!

Mary Ann stepped down from the Dexter Park Board in 2012 after a 33-year run. As a certified physical education teacher and sports enthusiast, she seemed the perfect fit on the board in 1979. During her tenure, she was instrumental in placing the 1/2 cent sales tax on the ballot in the year 2000. With its passing, the Park Board eventually hired a full-time director, built a facility to house personnel, completed the Dexter Aquatic Center, established the walking path at West City Park, and eventually became the governing entity for the city's summer and fall sports leagues. Additionally, the Dexter Parks and Recs gym was constructed at East City Park.

As a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Mary Ann has worn more hats than can be counted since moving to the community in the early 1970s from Aurora, Missouri. She is constantly called upon to head up and serve on a number of committees. She currently serves as president of the Parish Council and has held positions on the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and the Regional council of Catholic Women.

Dexter was the hometown of her husband, Steve. The two met while in college at the University of Missouri - Columbia (MiZZOU). Their only child, Dr. Mack Taylor, lives in Dexter and practices dentistry in Bernie, Missouri.

If there is a task to be done, she is there. If there is a mission to be fulfilled, a dinner to be organized, a church directory to be planned, a committee to head, up, Mary Ann will no doubt will be behind the effort. Whatever task is at hand, she completes it with thoroughness, seemingly with ease and always with grace and style that is hers alone.

A good organizer is a good delegate, and Mary Ann is one of those people who recognizes the need to secure reliable help as she heads up events like the Catholic Church - Annual Turkey Dinner that serves thousands and the October Festival of Sharing at the Methodist Church that is a regional effort to help the needy in an area that stretches all the way to Sedalia.

For the past 17 years, Mary Ann has also served on the board of what is now Aging Matters, formerly referred to as the Agency on Aging. In that capacity, she represents Stoddard County on an elected 18-member board, one member for each of the 18 southeast Missouri counties served by the non-profit.

For more than two decades, Mary Ann has also been a faithful servant of the local Stoddard County Nutrition Center, delivering Meals on Wheels to locals every Friday, right before she collects recyclables from crossroads Court residents and delivers those items to the recycling bin in town.

Mary Ann has also been heavily involved with the work of the Regional Healthcare Foundation and has served on their Board of Directors for the past five years. Her roles on the Foundation's board have included secretary and fundraising committee chair, and she is currently serving as the Board's vice president.

Additionally, she and Steve are longtime faithful supporters of the Keller Public Library. The Friends of the Library selected the pair as their "Friends of the Year" in 2014, and she often serves as a guest reader and performer at Story Hour. She also is a supporter of the library's annual Fashion Show.

"For her endless volunteerism, her tireless efforts on so many levels, and most of all, for her spirit of giving and asking for nothing in return, we thank you and honor you as our Citizen of the Year,"

Shown in the photo from left to right are: Tila Hubrecht, 151st State Representative, Billy Pat Wright, Field Representative for Senator Doug Libla, Mary Ann Taylor, and Hillary Starnes, Dexter Chamber of Commerce Executive Director.

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