

# Lifestyles



Rebecca McArthur of McArthur Farms received the 2020 Community Leader award at the Marlboro Chamber of Commerce annual meeting on Tuesday. From left are Janelle Bakogiannis, chair of the chamber board; Shannon Burroughs, executive director of the chamber; and McArthur.

Photo by Bennie Miles

## Marlboro Chamber of Commerce has annual meeting, presents awards

By JACQUELINE HOUGH

Rebecca McArthur was humbled and surprised when she heard her name announced to receive the 2020 Community Leader award at the Marlboro Chamber Annual Meeting.

"My desire from day one when I started here was to give back with what the Lord has blessed me with and try to keep my doors open," McArthur said with her voice cracking.

Janelle Bakogiannis, chair of the chamber board, said the award was created last year in response to the effects the historic hurricanes have had on the community and the amazing response one person had to handle the crisis and impact people's lives.

It was to be a one-time award but McArthur stepped up and impacted the community in many positive ways.

"For her efforts to partner with and come alongside other area businesses, her impact on her community through giving, and her positive and caring mindset that defines her business practices."

Using her business, she offered a helping hand, came up with creative solutions, and bounced ideas around.

"Most notably, she allowed a Marlboro County native to bring a fun and exciting meal to our town by lending her land and concession trailer to him," Bakogiannis said.

McArthur gave out free strawberries and adapted safety practices and cleaning requirements to stay open.

"All of this happened while her events, which we all look forward to eagerly, had to be canceled," Bakogiannis said.

The Community Leader and other awards were given to recognize those who went above and beyond to help the community during the COVID-19.

Marian Wright Edelman Public Library received the Non-Profit of the Year award for the second year in a row.

"We couldn't help recognize how they continued to serve our community as best they could despite a

pandemic that changed all of their plans and shut their doors," Bakogiannis said.

MWE was supposed to celebrate its 10th anniversary this year but the pandemic postpones celebrations.

"This didn't stop them from continuing to do what they do best provide resources and services that benefit our community," she said.

It was noted MWE kept programs up and running in creative and positive ways.

MWE Library Director Bobbie Grooms said she and the staff work very hard for the community each day.

"We are so grateful for each of you for your part in making our community what it is especially during a time like this," she said.

Gifts and More received the 2020 Business of the Year Award for its creative business practices that benefited the community as a whole and enduring attitude during a pandemic.

Bakogiannis said the store not only adapted but did so in a way that caused personal growth for herself and created new avenues for her business to serve the community. Two ways included Facebook videos and curbside pickups.

Owner Cindy Ayers thanked everyone.

"I wouldn't be here without the Marlboro Chamber of Commerce and my loyal customers," she said. "I have some really good customers that have supported me during the 23 years and hopefully for a lot more years."

Doug Jennings received the Business Person of the Year due to his service to his community and using his business as a way to give back to others.

"His presence in the community during the pandemic was especially felt by our first responders when he served a free lunch to them," Bakogiannis said. "His positive attitude and energy were noticed by all."

Jennings said it was touching to him and his team to be recognized.

He felt it was clear that they all stood on the shoulders of the giants. He talked about the previous generation before everyone

who made Marlboro County the special place it is.

"It makes me realize that all we are doing is carrying on and it is an honor and pleasure to do that," he said.

### Chamber update

Bakogiannis noted this year has not been an easy one. The Chamber scaled back drastically in their events and services during this time of COVID-19.

"We are ready to move forward as best we can, adapting our practices, and keeping our community safe while we work to support commerce," she said.

Despite events being canceled, the chamber was able to grow its membership by 15 percent in the past year. The Marlboro County Curbside To Go and Delivery Facebook page was created to drive commerce to local businesses.

New Executive Director Shannon Burroughs was introduced.

New 2020-21 Board of Directors Slade Avent, Pepsi-Cola of Bennettsville; Cindy Ayers, Gifts and More; Angela Blair, individual member; Ricky Sheets, Jennings Law; Jennifer Watts, Domtar; and George Webster, Carolina Bank were introduced.

Other members of the board are Leslie Herndon, Scotland Healthcare System; Tracie Stubbs, Scotland Healthcare System; Ed Taner and Rich Urquhart, The Village Marketplace; Cam Stone, Breeden's Quality Meats; Glenn Bunch, Bunch's Nursery; Amber Oxendine, Crescent Hospice; Caraline Harpe, individual member; Joe Hunsucker, Hunsucker Farms; Matt Haynie, Marlboro Electric Cooperative; Stacey Herndon, Midgley Insurance Agency; Deborah Dease, Marlboro County School District; and Janelle Bakogiannis, the Dairy Dream.

Board members who finished their terms were recognized and given a t-shirt. They were Dr. Mark Bunch, who served as chair; Dr. Michele Ann Petrone, secretary; Gailon Wisdom; Trina Speight; Dr. David Johnson; Herbert Gould; and Sully Blair.



Marian Wright Edelman Public Library received the 2020 Non-Profit of the Year award. From left are Shannon Burroughs, executive director of the chamber; Janelle Bakogiannis, chair of the chamber board; MWE Library Director Bobbie Grooms; MWE Friends of the Library board member Deborah Cunningham; Friends of the Library President Gail Harris; and Friends of the Library Secretary Wilma Workman.

Photo by Bennie Miles



Gifts and More received the 2020 Business of the Year award at the Marlboro Chamber of Commerce annual meeting on Tuesday. From left are Janelle Bakogiannis, chair of the chamber board; Shannon Burroughs, executive director of the chamber; and Gifts and More owner Cindy Ayers.

Photo by Bennie Miles



Doug Jennings of Jennings Law Firm, LLC, received the 2020 Business Person of the Year at the Marlboro Chamber of Commerce annual meeting on Tuesday. From left are Janelle Bakogiannis, Chair of the chamber board; Shannon Burroughs, executive director of the chamber; and Jennings.

Photo by Bennie Miles