

honored

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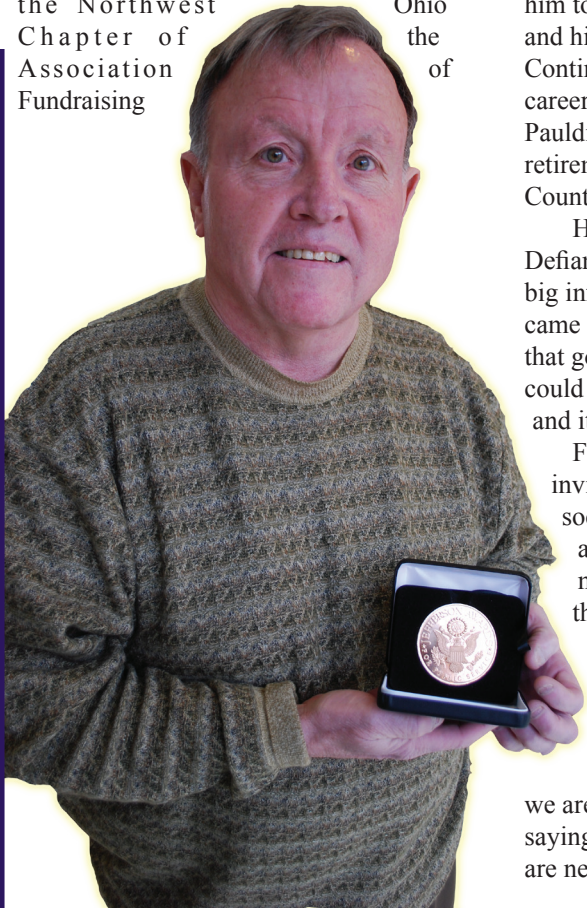
Don Smith has been recognized for his years of service to DC and for his philanthropic endeavors

By Kathy Punches '96, Director of Public Relations and Marketing

For Don Smith, all of the accolades that have been bestowed on him over the past year are icing on the cake. His true joy has been the decades of volunteerism that brought about the recognition.

Smith received the Schauffler Legacy Award from Defiance College in 2010 for his 35 years of service on the college's social work advisory board.

His years of volunteering for Diabetes Youth Services were recognized in 2010 at the National Philanthropy Day held by the Northwest Ohio Chapter of the Association of Fundraising



Professionals. And earlier this year, Smith's work with DYS earned him a spot as a finalist for the prestigious Jefferson Award for Public Service in Lima.

Much of Smith's adult life has been in service to others, whether as a professional social worker or as a volunteer. He graduated from DC's first class of social work majors in 1971, having followed his brother, Henry, to Defiance from New Hampshire. "I came here because at that time, the small liberal arts colleges were popular on the east coast, and Defiance was recruiting on the east coast."

After graduation, Smith entered the Army where his social work degree allowed him to work in a mental health facility. He and his wife, Connie, eventually settled in Continental, and he pursued his social work career at the former Lima State Hospital, the Paulding mental health center, and until his retirement, as a probation officer in Putnam County.

He credits much of his success to his Defiance College education. "Defiance had a big influence on me," he recounts. "Before I came here, my confidence level really wasn't that good. Getting a degree from Defiance, I could say, 'Yes, I graduated from Defiance,' and it got you in the door."

Former faculty member Chuck Hobgood invited Smith to serve on the College's social work advisory board, and he saw it as a perfect way to give back to his alma mater. The advisory board allows Smith the chance to think outside the box, ask critical questions, and compare what is being taught in the classroom with what is going on in the profession.

"At times I feel like the dinosaur," he laughs, "but it's interesting, because we are seeing things go full circle. They're saying things that were taught in the Sixties are new, but it's not new. From inpatient to

probation to things I saw in the military."

Smith has taken part in every accreditation that the program has gone through, and he has also served on the state licensure board for social workers and counselors.

He retired three years ago from his work as a probation officer, and that has allowed him more time for volunteerism. His focus, in addition to Defiance College, has been as a fundraiser for Diabetes Youth Services. His method of fundraising is unique.

A regular at the Defiance Area YMCA swimming pool, Smith noticed a pamphlet advertising a swimming fund-raiser for juvenile diabetes. He mentioned the idea to his doctor who told him if he swam 100 laps instead of his usual 70, he would donate \$100 for Diabetes Youth Services. That first year, Smith raised \$1,700 for DYS.

In the past eight years, Smith has raised more than \$61,000, with \$13,585 of that amount raised in the past year all by swimming laps for pledges.

He decided that if he was going to become involved with the organization, he wanted to see what services were being provided and how the money was being used. He and his wife visited summer camps for youth with diabetes. "The money I raise is used for assistance for kids whose families can't afford to pay for camp," he says. "I'll swim until I can't swim anymore."

Smith encourages others to find an activity or an organization that connects with them. "It could be any organization," he says. "I got hooked on DYS because my beliefs and their beliefs comingle."

Smith is the greatest individual supporter of Diabetic Youth Services in Maumee. The organization provides educational and support services for young people with diabetes in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. ♦