

Goleta Valley Chamber

Honoring Goleta's Finest

by **Devon Pettengill** / CASA

IN A TOUCHING DISPLAY OF SINCERITY AND UNITY, the Goleta Valley Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, friends, and family honored a selection of Goleta's accomplished citizens at the 60th Annual Goleta's Finest Awards at the beautiful Bacara Resort & Spa on Thursday, May 8th.

"Tonight's honorees are a reflection of the great place we live in," Goleta Mayor Mike Bennett shared with the crowd. "We have the greatest people in this village."

The event recognized the businesses and individuals who have made significant contributions to the community, whether by stimulating the local economy, improving educational opportunities, or volunteering to aid those in need.

"The honorees have in common hard work, soft hearts, and the gift of giving," shared Kristen Amyx, President of the Goleta Chamber.

The 250 attendees included Goleta Mayor Pro Tempore Roger Aceves, Goleta Councilmembers Eric Onnen and Jean Blois, and candidate for 3rd District Supervisor Doreen Farr.

The event was entirely underwritten by local businesses, including one of Goleta's biggest employers, the Bacara Resort, allowing all the proceeds to directly benefit the Goleta Chamber. Guests also bid in a silent auction to benefit the Goleta Education Foundation, which provides additional private funding to Goleta's schools.

Twelve awards were presented to their recipients by representatives from the event's platinum business sponsors, emphasizing the unity between Goleta's businesses and the community.

"Goleta understands the concept of a village," shared Colette Hadley, winner of this year's Woman of the Year Award and Executive Director of the Santa Barbara Scholarship Foundation. "It's about the spirit of cooperation and fun."

Bacara Resort & Spa presented Colette Hadley, Executive Director of the Santa Barbara Scholarship Foundation, with the Woman of the Year Award. Venoco, Inc. presented Merlyn Cummings, President of Goleta Valley Beautiful, with the Man of the Year Award.

The Volunteer of the Year Award, presented by the Goleta Valley Chamber of Commerce, went to Christine LeBon of Santa Barbara Airbus. The Human Services Professional of the Year Award was given to Joyce McCullough, Executive



Bruce Micheel, Past President of SB Scholarship Foundation, and Woman of the Year **Colette Hadley**, Executive Director of SB Scholarship Foundation



GV Chamber Chairman **Jim Knight** and Volunteer of the Year **Christine LeBon**.



Jan Anderson, **Jerry Anderson** of Small Business of the Year Anderson Systems, and **Scott Gordon**, President of Haagen Printing



Wendy Jensen, Public Relations for Bacara; Special Recognition Award recipient **Don Oparah** of UCSB Venture Acceleration Initiative; and **Annie Montalvo** of Bacara Resort & Spa



Educator of the Year **Amir Abo-Shaeer** and **Mike Eskenazi** of ATK Space Systems



Michelle and **Greg Nurdyke**, Public Servant of the Year



Dennis Lidall and **Rafi Simon** of UCSB's Venture Acceleration Initiative, recipient of the Special Recognition Award



Randy Weiss of Santa Barbara Bank & Trust and **Joyce McCullough**, Human Services Professional of the Year



Steve Greig of Venoco Inc., Man of the Year **Merlyn Cummings** and **Kristen Amyx**, President and CEO of the GV Chamber of Commerce

Director of Habitat for Humanity of South Santa Barbara County. Santa Barbara Bank & Trust presented the award. Greg Nurdyke received the Public Servant of the Year Award for his years of dedication to public safety. The award was presented by Cox Media.

Amir Abo-Shaeer was presented with the Educator of the Year Award 7-12, for his dedication to the Dos Pueblos Engineering Academy, by ATK Space Systems. The

Educator of the Year Award for K-6 went to Edward Armstrong for his 39 years of service to the students of the Santa Barbara Union School Districts. It was presented by Montecito Bank & Trust.

The Towbes Group presented the Student of

the Year Award to Stacie Rayburn Raichelle for her academic, extra-curricular, and charitable accomplishments. Raichelle was traveling in Israel at the time of the ceremony and the award was accepted by her sister Gina on her behalf. UCSB's Venture Acceleration Initiative won the Special Recognition Award for their efforts to turn UCSB research and development into successful businesses; the award was presented by Davies.

The Entrepreneur of the Year Award went to Bill Macfadyen of Noozhawk.com for attention to and involvement in the community, presented by Cabrillo Business Park. Anderson Systems won the Small Business of the Year Award, presented by Haagen Printing. Citrix Online won Large Business of the Year, presented by Business First Bank.

For more information about the Goleta Valley Chamber of Commerce, visit www.goletavalley.com



Back Row: **Jim Knight**, **Steve Greig**, **Steve Fedde**, **Rob Skinner**, **John Davies**, **Bill Macfadyen**, **Greg Nurdyke**, **Amir Abo-Shaeer**, **Don Oparah**, **Merlyn Cummings**, **Jerry Anderson**, **Mike Eskenazi**, and **Scott Gordon**. Front Row: **Christine LeBon**, **Joanne Funari**, **Laura McCormick**, **Annie Montalvo**, **Colette Hadley**, **Gina Rayburn Raichelle**, **Joyce McCullough**, and **Kristen Amyx**