

# Town Treasure event honors 12 residents

Lauded for service, contributions

BY CONOR FURLONG  
STAFF WRITER

Mary Morrow came to Chapel Hill in 1949 seeking a degree in mathematics, but more than half a century later she has become a permanent part of the town's history.

"A lot of people have done more service than I have," said Morrow, who has worked with the Chapel Hill Historical Society, Chapel Hill Museum and PlayMakers Repertory Company. "I'm just another cog in the community wheel."

The Chapel Hill Historical Society honored Morrow and 11 other residents for service to the community in the third annual Town Treasures ceremony held at the Robert and Pearl Seymour Center on Monday afternoon.

Janice Tyler, interim director of the Orange County Department on Aging, said the program's goal is to archive the contributions of local residents.

Each newly recognized individual is commemorated by a biographical display at the center's

Town Treasures exhibit.

"When the historical society contacted us about the idea three years ago, we were delighted to honor these people," Tyler said. "People come by just to see the exhibit."

Local photographer Catharine Carter helped found the program and also takes the pictures of all the honorees displayed at the exhibit.

"We were so appreciative of how many little things they started to benefit us and the community," Carter said.

Many of the inductees are tied together through work for groups like the Preservation Society of Chapel Hill and other similar organizations.

Robert Patton, another new addition to the list of Town Treasures, served in the U.S. Army during World War II and helped liberate several Nazi prison camps.

After his service, Patton came to Chapel Hill in 1964, working in communications technology that paved the way for interactive computing.

"My mission was to simply find problems and solve them with computers," he said.

Patton, who has been actively involved with the University Presbyterian Church and the historical society, said he loves the town's cultural appeal.

"Being able to go downtown and see young folks with the whole world ahead of them — it's a real joy," he said.

Inductee Mary "Bitty" Holton served as president of the Chapel Hill Garden Club and was also chairwoman of the Chapel Hill bicentennial parade in 1993, organizing the event and managing those in the parade.

"It was lots of work but lots of fun," Holton said. "Everyone was caught up in celebrating our town."

Although the afternoon focused on the new class of Town Treasures, many shied away from receiving praise.

*"Being of service is always a reward in itself. You don't have to be thanked."*

**JEAN HOLCOMB**, VIKING TRAVEL

Jean Holcomb, a new addition who founded local travel agency Viking Travel, stressed the inherent value of community service.

"Being of service is always a reward in itself," she said. "You don't have to be thanked."

Other inductees include the late Margie Pfaff, Velma Perry, Elizabeth Ryan, Anne Barnes, Richard Johnson, Sen. Ellie Kinnaird, D-Orange, Jane Monroe and Clarence Whitefield.

Contact the City Editor at [city@dailytarheel.com](mailto:city@dailytarheel.com).



DTH/ROBYN ELLISON  
Clarence Whitefield stands with his portrait at the Town Treasure event at the Seymour Center on Monday. Whitefield and 11 others were honored.

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