



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

## 2016-2017 CITIZENS COMMITTEE OF RECOGNITION NOMINEE DESCRIPTIONS

### CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – MARY FERTIG

**Mary Fertig** is a long-time Fort Lauderdale resident who has been a community advocate for more than 30 years. In particular, Ms. Fertig has spent countless hours and financial support advocating for the public school system. From elementary to high schools, Ms. Fertig has brought the needs of Fort Lauderdale's schools to the forefront of the School Board of Broward County. Ms. Fertig's efforts have ensured equity for Fort Lauderdale schools and the outcomes have included new and renovated school facilities, most recently for Stranahan High School, and specialized programs for children of varying academic abilities, such as Advanced Placement and Pre-Law programs, the Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Program at Fort Lauderdale High School, and Montessori at Virginia Shuman Young. Ms. Fertig's tireless vision continues to put children, Fort Lauderdale's future leaders, first by ensuring they, and those that follow, have excellent, high-quality public schools to attend. Thousands of Fort Lauderdale youth have benefitted from Ms. Fertig's dedication, hard work, and undying spirit for public education.

In addition to her passion for education, Ms. Fertig is committed to achieving a safer, more sustainable Fort Lauderdale that will advance the City and the well-being of its citizens forward far into the future. Through a grassroots approach, Ms. Fertig has worked diligently to elevate the character and livability of Fort Lauderdale, pursuing issues such as traffic safety, infrastructure, and development. Ms. Fertig strives to represent the community as a whole, not just her neighborhood. Her leadership approach has galvanized her fellow neighbors through inclusion and education to increase awareness of issues that are vital to the sustainability and improvement of Fort Lauderdale, while elevating civic engagement and informed decision making that is reflective of the desires of the citizenry.

### About Mary Fertig

Mary Fertig is a seventh generation Floridian who attended Fort Lauderdale High School and Florida State University. Ms. Fertig, along with her husband, Christopher, raised six children in Fort Lauderdale while assisting with the management of Fertig & Gramling Law Partnership. Ms. Fertig currently serves as the president of the Idlewyld Improvement Association and is also the founding president of Lauderdale Tomorrow, a community of residents dedicated to preserving the City of Fort Lauderdale by ensuring its sustainable future.

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### DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN – RONALD CENTAMORE

**Ronald Centamore** has been a long-time civic activist in the City of Fort Lauderdale, participating in numerous boards and committees that have made a significant change in the fabric of Fort Lauderdale's community. Among his many achievements, Mr. Centamore introduced and served on the Ad Hoc Code Reform Committee, served as a member of the Code Amnesty Committee, and was a member of the City's Homeless Task Force.

Mr. Centamore has served in leadership roles for multiple associations, including the Downtown Civic Association and the Progresso Village Civic Association. Mr. Centamore has also been appointed by the Mayor and City Commission to serve on high-level Commission committees to assess the needs of the City and to recommend needed changes citywide. Currently, Mr. Centamore serves as the President of the Fort Lauderdale Council of Civic Associations.

Whether at the helm leading the charge or serving as a staunch supporter and community activist, Mr. Centamore's unwavering commitment to the City of Fort Lauderdale, his love for his community, and his desire to serve have made a significant impact on the City of Fort Lauderdale and will continue to do so well into the future.

### **About Mr. Centamore**

Mr. Centamore is a long-time Fort Lauderdale resident who is married to Karen Centamore and they have several children and grandchildren. Mr. Centamore is a retired police officer, serving both in Newburgh, NY and in Fort Lauderdale. Upon retirement, Mr. Centamore continues to make a difference in his community through his participation and support of the City's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and his continued civic engagement and community activism. Mr. Centamore has also been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Downtown Fort Lauderdale Civic Association's "Champions of Downtown" Award in 2013.

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### **EXEMPLARY FORMER CITY EMPLOYEE – FREDDIE “GENE” DEMPSEY**

**Freddie “Gene” Dempsey** began his career at the City of Fort Lauderdale in 1996, where he served as the City's Urban Forester until 2017. As the City's Urban Forester, Mr. Dempsey introduced numerous innovative and sustainable initiatives, and his contributions touched almost every aspect of the organization, bringing both recognition and honor to the City.

A few of Mr. Dempsey's most notable achievements over his 20-year career with the City include managing the Adopt-A-Tree Program, continuing the City's Tree City USA designation, developing the City's hazardous tree removal policy, collaborating with the Utility Advisory Board to improve utility tree trimming, conducting community tree plantings and quarterly tree giveaways, and participating in the development of the Save-A-Tree, Plant-A-Tree program to encourage sustainability while expanding the City's tree canopy.

Mr. Dempsey was also instrumental in initiating the City's street tree planting requirement for all new development, implementing the City's Florida-Friendly Landscaping® code, assisting the City with achieving its Certified Wildlife Habitat certification, purchasing and maintaining the City's tree inventory software program, participating in the development of LauderScape, and regularly presenting at Career Day events to teach our youngest community members about being an arborist.

Mr. Dempsey had an excellent reputation for superior customer service, was a respected teacher and speaker in South Florida's arboriculture industry, and was recognized as a person of action and accomplishment in planting trees in our urban community. What Mr. Dempsey was widely known for was his kind, unassuming nature, which embodied immense consideration for his peers, an undeniable compassion for his community, a strong sense of conviction for the values that he truly cared about, and his willingness to unselfishly give of himself to educate others, even on his own personal time.

### **About Freddie “Gene” Dempsey**

Freddie “Gene” Dempsey grew up in Bay Minette, Alabama and graduated from Auburn University in 1981 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Management. Mr. Dempsey relocated to Florida in 1986 where he worked for the Florida Division of Forestry for 10 years. In 1996, Mr. Dempsey began working for the City of Fort Lauderdale as the Urban Forester and remained employed at the City until he passed away in early 2017 following a courageous battle with cancer. In the short time since his passing, more than 2,000 trees have been planted in Mr. Dempsey's memory through the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Mr. Dempsey was married to Debbie Sarbey Dempsey and he has one son, Zachary Dempsey.

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## HONORED FOUNDER – THE LATE TERRY STILES

**Terry W. Stiles** was a visionary of the live, work, play downtown lifestyle whose contributions made an indelible mark across South Florida, especially in the City of Fort Lauderdale, where he was the catalyst that helped build the City's thriving downtown and shape its skyline.

As Chairman of Stiles Corporation, Mr. Stiles developed more than 43 million square feet of award-winning projects, including urban and suburban office buildings, master-planned and mixed-use corporate parks, luxury residential communities, and retail shopping centers. Mr. Stiles' portfolio includes more than 4 million square feet of award-winning office, residential, and retail developments in the City's Las Olas business district alone.

Mr. Stiles' contributions to Fort Lauderdale helped develop a downtown that is iconic, sustainable, and flourishing. With signature projects including the New River Center, Bank of America Plaza at Las Olas City Centre, AutoNation headquarters, 350 and 450 Las Olas Center, Amaray Las Olas, and 350 Condos, Mr. Stiles' intelligence, foresight, and passion led to remarkable buildings the City can be proud of; while his heart led to the economic success that has driven growth across the City.

In addition to beautifying and revitalizing his hometown, Mr. Stiles was a firm believer in giving back and has led by example as a community leader. Mr. Stiles was personally involved with more than 30 charitable organizations, mostly in Broward County, in support of children, education, and family, including the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, the American Heart Association, Junior Achievement of South Florida, Boys & Girls Club of Broward County, Broward College, Humane Society of Broward County, Kids in Distress, and Habitat for Humanity.

Mr. Stiles also held numerous leadership positions, giving unselfishly of his time as President of the Jack and Jill Children's Center, Past Vice Chairman of the Broward Workshop, member of the CEO Council of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, member of the Board of Directors of the Broward Performing Arts Foundation, Inc., Past Chairman of the Port Everglades Advocacy Team, Past Chairman of the Friends of the Airport, member of the Executive Association of Fort Lauderdale, and a member of the General's Club for the Boys and Girls Club of Broward.

In recognition of his achievements, Mr. Stiles was honored with several prestigious awards including Fort Lauderdale's Citizen of the Year, National Association of Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP) National Developer of the Year, NAIOP South Florida Developer of the Year, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance Ray Ferrero, Jr. Leadership Award, the Urban Land Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award, the Junior Achievement of South Florida's Business Hall of Fame Laureate Award, Sun-Sentinel's Philanthropist of the Year Award and the Excalibur Award, United Way's Community Hero Award, in which he was commissioned to carry the torch at the 1996 Olympic cross-country relay, and most recently, the South Florida Business Journal's Ultimate CEO Award.

### **About Terry Stiles**

Terry W. Stiles was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, but moved to Florida with his family at an early age and resided in Fort Lauderdale for most of his life. Mr. Stiles assumed leadership of Stiles Corporation as Chairman in 1971 and, under his leadership, the company grew to become one of the largest full-service real estate companies in the Southeast.

Mr. Stiles and his wife, Jamie, have three children and four grandchildren. Mr. Stiles passed away on September 11, 2017 after a courageous battle with cancer, leaving his son, Kenneth, to continue Mr. Stiles' legacy and expand upon the Stiles brand.