



GRINDSTONE AWARD



2018

Jeff Haas

Jeff Haas is “not only an outstanding volunteer. He is a leader among volunteers,” notes one nomination letter for the Chamber of Commerce’s Grindstone Award.

The award is given annually to an outstanding Berea citizen. Haas will receive the award during the Annual Grindstone Award Banquet on April 19th.

Born in West Reading, PA, Haas describes his hometown as a “little borough between Harrisburg and Philadelphia.” He graduated from the University of Pittsburg in 1970 with an engineering degree and then went on to earn a Master’s at the University of Toledo. A research job at the U.S. Army Propulsion Lab brought him to Cleveland. He worked there for 15 years before joining NASA Glenn, where he retired in 2012 as Chief of the Testing Division.

A busy job never kept him from becoming involved in his community.

“I like being involved,” Haas said. “If it’s a priority, you’ll find a way to get it done.”

He credits his father for setting an example. Haas’ father and mother both worked in the local hospital, but his dad found time to be part-time Mayor for West Reading and was active in the Masons, among other organizations.

In high school, Haas was on Student Council, played varsity golf and intramural sports, was on the yearbook and school newspaper staff, and played in the band.

“That was the genesis,” Haas said. When he moved to Berea in 1975, he hit the ground running, volunteering at St. Mary’s Church where he has been a lector for 20 years and an extraordinary minister for

five years. He was President of the Parish Council and of the Finance Committee and served the church in many other roles, including the Athletic Committee.

He has been a coach with the Berea Baseball Association and served as President of BBA for four years. He is a member of the Berea-Midpark High School Athletic Boosters. He has worked the Berea Relays for 15 years and received the Bob Purdy Award for his volunteer efforts. He has been Chairman of the Berea High School Athletic Hall of Fame Committee since 2010. Haas is an active member of Berea Kiwanis and will be inducted as President this fall. He is a member of Berea City Club and serves as its treasurer. He also volunteers with Hanson House, a Berea-based support organization for those with traumatic brain injuries and their families. He was honored with a Hanson House Volunteer Award last year.

“The key to juggling all these activities is time management”, Haas said. “I’m organized and very methodical. My brain is always going.”

He said he was very discouraged to read a national report that stated only 25% of people 16 and older volunteered an average of one hour a week. “If you’re going to give, make a real effort,” he said. “Get involved.”

He set an example for his own children becoming involved with their many school activities and keeping with it even after they graduated.

Haas said he is proud of his career and of his involvement in the community. His many activities don’t tire or overtax him. “I ask myself, have I reached the breaking point? But I haven’t reached it yet. I have been able to keep all the balls in the air.”

Haas has been married to wife Jeanne since 1972. They have three children, Shannon, a teacher in Brunswick; Kevin, who works in the Berea Service Department; and Todd, who does environmental remediation work in Pittsburg. They have seven grandchildren.

Once he learned about Haas’ award, friend Jim Walters, the retired Berea Law Director, wrote to him, “No one who wins the Grindstone thinks they deserve it.”

“That’s true,” said Haas. “It is a challenge. But if I say I am going to do something, I do it.”

Presented April 19, 2018

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Middleburg Heights, Ohio