

# NEWS RELEASE

County of Warren, New Jersey  
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## William Spencer Named Warren County's Outstanding Senior Citizen

(INDEPENDENCE TWP., NJ, MAY 25, 2017) – Phillipsburg resident William J. Spencer, praised for his years of volunteering on educational issues and other civic activities, is the 2017 Mary Louise Christine Outstanding Senior Citizen of Warren County.

Spencer received the award at a celebration of Older Americans Month conducted by the Warren County Division of Aging & Disability Services and the county's Aging Services Advisory Council and held at the Independence Township Senior Center.

Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner and Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski presented Spencer with the award and recognized five other nominees.

A Phillipsburg resident for the past 46 years, Spencer was raised in Avoca, PA. He graduated from Kings College in Wilkes-Barre, PA in 1968, receiving a Master's Degree from Trenton State College of New Jersey in 1977, and spent 36 years working as a teacher, counselor, and administrator in Warren County schools. Involved in all levels of education from elementary through adult education, his career included a year with the New Jersey State Department of Education during which he monitored school facilities and reviewed grant applications for schools in Warren and Sussex Counties.

Spencer has continued his involvement in education as a volunteer, serving on the founding committee to establish a Special Services School District within Warren County for students with multiple disabilities. He also has been a member of the Special Services School District's Board of



*William J. Spencer receives the 2017 Mary Louise Christine Outstanding Senior Citizen of Warren County award from Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner and Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski.*

Education for 27 years and served as President of the Board for 23 of those years. Spencer is presently serving his 6th year as a member of the Phillipsburg Board of Education, and has been president of that board as well.

Besides his involvement in education, Spencer has taken an active role in many Phillipsburg community organizations. He believes it is important to give back to his community. This commitment was influenced by his father, Harry Spencer, who was the Fire Chief of the volunteer fire department in Avoca, PA. Later, when moving to Phillipsburg, his father-in-law, Arthur E. Tron, also demonstrated the importance of being actively involved in the community.



*Outstanding Senior nominees: seated, Robert Detrick; standing left to right, Aging and Disability Services Division Director Scott Burd, nominee Dean Rossi, honoree William J. Spencer; Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner, nominee Anthony Turdo, Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski, nominee Barbara Green, and nominee Stephen Brickman.*

“I had two great examples in these men to influence my dedication and involvement in Phillipsburg. I can proudly say that our three sons are also actively involved in their communities,” Spencer said.

Married to the former Rose Marie Tron, their sons are Will, Jarrod, and Travis, and they have nine grandchildren.

Throughout the years, Spencer has been an active member of several service organizations and youth clubs. He is past President of

the Phillipsburg Lions Club; 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree member of the Knights of Columbus; and a former member of the Atlantic States Community Action Program, the Board of Directors of the Firth Youth Center, and the Phillipsburg 150th Anniversary Planning Committee. He is actively involved in the Phillipsburg Senior Center and serves as Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

Spencer’s dedication to the youth of the community has been recognized, as he received the Honorary Lifetime Gold Card Member of the Phillipsburg Garnet Booster Club and awarded membership to the West Jersey Youth Football Hall of Fame for his activities with the Warren County Midget Football League. Spencer enjoyed coaching the Firthtown basketball team and baseball for the Bernadine-May American Legion Athletics. He was Athletic Director of the Firthtown Athletic Club and the Phillipsburg Athletic Club (wrestling).

Several organizations also have acknowledged his service over the years. He has received the Municipal Alliance Volunteer Service Award, the Warren County ARC Recognition Award for 25 years

of Volunteer Services for the advancement of citizens with disabilities in Warren County, and the BEST Scholarship Foundation Award for Lifetime Educational Achievement. The NJ School Board Association awarded him their Milestone Award for his 25 years as a volunteer member of the Board of Education for Special Services School District. He was recently honored by the Board of Trustees of the Joseph H. Firth Youth Center when he received their annual “Lifetime Achievement” Award.

But Spencer said he feels he is not alone in his community commitments, remarking, “I believe that one of the positives of the Town of Phillipsburg lies in the large number of citizens who volunteer their time to help others. We are rich with youth organizations, community service clubs, church groups, military groups, firefighters, emergency squad members, and senior organizations. Where would a town be without such a dedicated group of volunteers? I admire and respect all those who go out of their way to help others.”

Also recognized were Stephen Brickman of Lopatcong Township, Robert Detrick of Belvidere, Barbara Green of Blirstown, Dean Rossi of Washington, and Anthony Turdo of Alpha.

The award has been given since 1984 but was renamed in 2007 to honor Mary Louise Christine shortly before the 85-year-old community activist from Washington Township passed away. The Warren County Division of Aging and Disabilities Advisory Council conducts a search and identifies one older adult who characterizes the true spirit of the award. Nominations are accepted in the Spring each year.

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