



Contact: Jordan Killebrew

Communications Manager, Santa Barbara Foundation

Jkillebrew@sbfoundation.org; 805-963-1873

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Santa Barbara Foundation Announces 75th Man & Woman of the Year

SANTA BARBARA, CA – The Santa Barbara Foundation and sponsoring partners Noozhawk, Montecito Bank & Trust, and Bryant & Sons, Ltd. announced today that the 75th Man & Woman of the Year honorees will be Ernesto Paredes and Joni Meisel. The two will be honored for their contributions and service to the community at a reception at the Four Seasons Biltmore, Coral Casino, on September 5, 2018.

"It is our pleasure to recognize Ernesto Paredes and Joni Meisel as recipients of the 75th Man & Woman of the Year awards," said Ron Gallo, President & CEO of the Santa Barbara Foundation. "Service through volunteerism to the community is our highest priority for this award, and we look forward to celebrating these individuals who work diligently to make a positive and significant impact on the lives of Santa Barbara residents."

The first Man & Woman of the Year were Harold Chase in 1942 and Pearl Chase in 1956. Recent recipients include Steve Lyons and Carol Palladini, Bill Cirone and Anne Smith Towbes, Ken Saxon and Patricia MacFarlane, Clifford W. Sponsel and Gerd Jordano, Ed Birch and Vicki Hazard, as well as Jon Clark and Janet Garufis.

Ernesto Paredes - 75th Man of the Year

Ernesto Paredes has served in many different initiatives across the community, including his volunteer roles with Future Leaders of America, Executive Director Roundtable, and the Sansum Diabetes Research Institute. His 23-year tenure as Executive Director of Easy Lift Transportation Service has been invaluable to thousands of individuals and families in the community. He lends his instrumental insight in each role, and demonstrates an unshakeable commitment to reshaping and building underrepresented populations.

"He is truly respected and loved by so many in the community and he always 'walks the talk,' never just giving an opinion and then leaving the project or discussion," said David Selberg, CEO of Hospice of

Santa Barbara. "He fully immerses himself in the business at hand and he has been a wonderful collaborator and support to me in my role."

Paredes is known as a natural leader, and one who brings energy and passion to every organization he is involved with. He challenges himself and others to excel, and his enthusiasm is a key factor in fundraising and awareness efforts.

Paredes further demonstrates his commitment to the community with his volunteer efforts with the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Leadership Council, Cottage Hospital, and Special Olympics of Santa Barbara.

"Ernesto generously contributes his time, treasure, and considerable talents to so many worthy local efforts, it would be hard to capture the entirety of his impact," said Janet A. Garufis, Chairman & CEO of Montecito Bank & Trust and 74th Woman of the Year. "[His] quiet, exemplary leadership and commitment to the well-being of our entire community is worthy of celebration."

Joni Meisel - 75th Woman of the Year

Joni Meisel is a long-time Santa Barbara County resident who has dedicated her life to helping others. She is known for passionately promoting strong educational opportunities for youth and standing up for communities in need of support, such as seniors and those struggling with homelessness.

"Joni's interest in the well-being of all in the community is universally known and respected. Over the years she has touched the lives of many through her involvement in public education initiatives and countless community groups," said Mary Standlee, former Board member for the Santa Barbara Board of Education.

Over the decades, Joni has served in leadership capacities for numerous community organizations, including, CALM Board of Trustees, Santa Barbara Public Education Fund Board of Trustees (now the Santa Barbara Education Foundation), and Anti-Defamation League's Santa Barbara/Tri-Counties Regional Board.

She has also served as the facilitator for the Foundation Roundtable of Santa Barbara County since 2003, and is an active member of her synagogue and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Joni is particularly concerned with senior issues and services. While serving as a Board member for Santa Barbara Village, she has done important work to improve services and programs that help seniors remain in their homes and engaged within their communities.

"Joni has a massive resume of caring for people and for our community. She has led some of the most important organizations in our community and has engaged with many more," said Jon Clark, President of the Bower Foundation and 74th Man of the Year. "As a person, she engages all with empathy, clarity and wisdom and does what she does without any regard for recognition. In short, Joni is a gem and most worthy of this recognition."

For more details on the 75th Man & Woman of the Year Awards or reception, please contact the Santa Barbara Foundation at (805) 963-1873 or Jordan Killebrew, Communications Manager, at JKillebrew@sbfoundation.org.

About Santa Barbara Foundation:

Founded in 1928, the Santa Barbara Foundation is the largest community foundation in the region and the county's go-to resource for investment and capacity-building, as well as a key convener of people

and organizations. The foundation has provided support to nearly every Santa Barbara County nonprofit organization and essential community project in its 90-year history. The Santa Barbara Foundation connects those who give with those in need and all who dream of a better community. To learn more please visit SBFoundation.org.

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