

Opinion

## Local people have given back to county

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By L. Brooks Patterson

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Even in the darkness of economic distress, there are those among us who step forward to brighten our world by enhancing the quality of life for their fellow citizens.

That certainly applies to the four outstanding individuals who will be honored at my 18th Annual Quality People, Quality County Awards Breakfast in the Centerpointe Marriott on Tuesday, Sept. 28.

Albert Scaglione, president and owner of Park West Gallery in Southfield, learned the value of a dollar at the age of 8 working Saturdays on his father's scrap metal truck in Nutley, N.J. When he turned 16, Scaglione jumped down off his dad's truck and into a job at a cousin's art gallery where he learned the techniques of stretching and varnishing canvasses and framing works of art.

After receiving his doctorate in mechanical engineering, Scaglione landed a job with NASA. When the government canceled the project on which he had been working, he re-entered the art world. His Park West Gallery on Northwestern Highway has served more than 1.3 million customers over the past 41 years.

The gallery has prospered and so have the individuals and organizations Scaglione and his family have taken under their wing. The Park West Foundation, which he founded, has been a source of support for young women forced to leave the foster care system at the age of 18. Park West Gallery also donates art to charitable groups, opens the gallery to 501(c)(3) charities for fundraisers and has made available about \$1.5 million worth of clothing to those in need. Scaglione has what might be called an "Art with a Heart" perspective on life, which has given him the joy and satisfaction of being able to give back to his community by helping to improve the quality of life for others.

Ron Kagan, executive director and CEO of the Detroit Zoological Society, has had two passions in life: Cars and animals. Fortunately for the 1.2 million visitors who walk through the gates of the zoo annually, Ron chose the latter as his life's work.

In his 17 years as director, Kagan has transformed the zoo into Michigan's number one tourist attraction with a variety of innovative and exciting exhibits. Among these are the Wildlife Interpretive Gallery, The Arctic Ring of Life, the National Conservation Center and the 126 seat 3-D/4-D Theater at the Ford Education Center.

Kagan has shaped the Detroit Zoo into a one-of-a-kind experience that can be enjoyed by people of all ages.

A healthy dose of good news is the new Oakland University/William Beaumont School of Medicine.

Spearheading this joint venture is Dr. Gary Russi, president of Oakland University and Ken Matzick, the recently retired CEO of Beaumont Hospitals. These two highly skilled administrators have successfully shepherded this ambitious, multi-million dollar project through a labyrinth of challenges and hurdles. As a result of their leadership, the OU/Beaumont School of Medicine is poised to welcome its first class of 50 aspiring doctors in August, 2011.

The need for doctors has never been more acute. It's estimated that 4,400 Michigan doctors and 100,000 nationwide will hang up their white coats in the next few years.

In addition, the OU/Beaumont School of Medicine will pack an economic wallop.

It will spawn an estimated \$1 billion in new investment and create 11,000 new jobs.

Scaglione, Kagan, Russi and Matzick are living symbols of what the great Greek orator and philosopher, Pericles, meant when he wrote the following words thousands of years ago: "What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others."

L. Brooks Patterson is the Oakland County executive

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