

# Citizen of the Year Recipients Announced

## City Council

August 25, 2009

Winners were honored at a reception held on August 24, 2009 in City Council Chambers at 6:15 p.m. before the regularly scheduled City Council meeting. During the meeting, Rock Island Township was named the overall "Citizen of the Year." Representatives of the Rock Island Township will also serve as Grand Marshal of the Labor Day Parade. Rock Island Township is a resource for Rock Island residents who need a helping hand. This organization has been giving back to the community for many, many years.



*Congratulations Rock Island Township  
selected as Overall 2009 Citizen of the Year.*

Congratulations to the following individuals and organizations selected as winners in the following Citizen of the Year categories:



**Business – Wheelan-Pressly Funeral Home** continues to serve Rock Island families in their time of need. Mr. Steve Pressly began his career with Wheelan Funeral Home decades ago. He purchased the building and decided to expand the business. He chose to remain in Rock Island and rescued a dilapidated old building on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and replaced it with a beautiful facility that is a wonderful addition to the neighborhood.



**Professional – Italo 'Lo' Milani** is an Emeritus member of the American Institute of Architects, a member of Rock Island Rotary and the Rock Island Art Guild. For over 30 years he has given his time and architectural



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talents to those in Rock Island that cannot afford the full fees of an architect, yet need to upgrade their home to meet code requirements. He continues to work with City staff and residents to protect the housing stock in Rock Island and has worked to save many architectural treasures throughout the city.



**Education – Michelle Lillis** is a math teacher at Rock Island High School and also the girl's track coach. Through her efforts and commitment to our youth, the girl's track team took first place honors at the State Track Meet earlier this year. Ms. Lillis empowers her students and athletes to be the very best they can be, and as a result, she helps students strive for academic achievement and mentors them to be good citizens in their community



**Organization – Rock Island Township** is a resource for Rock Island residents that are unemployed, poor and homeless, hungry or just need a little help. The Township office building is home to the St. Joseph Evening Meal that serves a free meal every night. They offer emergency rent and food assistance, job seeking assistance, computer training, clothing for job interviews, food pantry, and they partner with many other agencies and churches. When the Township sees a need in the community, they work to design a program to help fill that need.



**Individual – Robert Fout** is project manager for Quad- City Freight. Mr. Fout coached for Rock Island Parks and Recreation for many years, and five years ago he started the Rock Island Rage Boys Soccer traveling team. He coaches a culturally diverse group of players and when there is a language barrier; Mr. Fout recruits volunteers as translators. When players are from low-income families, he pays for uniforms and fees so they will have the opportunity to play last year, he started another traveling team for girl's soccer.

**City Employee – James J. Fobert** is Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Rock Island. Over the years, Mr. Fobert has been involved in coaching and working with the youth throughout the community. As a City employee, he goes above and beyond the responsibilities of his job, always going the extra mile to follow up with families to make sure that they get the assistance they need after a fire or emergency.



**Youth – Colin Carstens** is a recent graduate of Rock Island High School. He was a member of the football team, baseball team and basketball team. Colin's senior year was his first year of wrestling and he competed in the State Wrestling tournament, He was selected for the All Western Big 6 Baseball Team. Colin received the O'Melia Award for outstanding achievements in leadership, sportsmanship and character on the athletic field an in the classroom. He was also involved in the Student Hunger Drive and on the Student Council.



**Honorary – Michael J. Oberhaus** is Associate Superintendent of Operations and Quality for the Rock-Island-Milan School District, member of the Rock Island Noon Optimist Club and Board member and former Chairman of the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center. Mr. Oberhaus worked with citizens of Rock Island to pass a major bond referendum that enabled the school district to build a new school and update its aging buildings. He is a coach of the Challenger Little league, involved in with a dental program for children in need, and is involved with

the First Day school supply fund in the Rock Island-Milan School District.



***All Citizen of the Year Winners with Mayor Pauley.***