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Contact: Judith Smith-Meyer

Director of Marketing and Communications

JSmith-Meyer@SBFoundation.org

(805) 880-9365

Elisabeth Fowler and Joe Howell selected as 80th Persons of the Year

Tickets for 80th Person of the Year luncheon on sale now

(SANTA BARBARA, CA) – Elisabeth Fowler and Joe Howell have been selected as the 80th Persons of the Year for the Santa Barbara area. The two will be honored for their volunteer contributions and service to the community at an in-person luncheon on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at the Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort Rotunda.

Tickets go on sale Wednesday, March 22, cost \$80 each and may be purchased online at SBFoundation.org/PYAwards.

“We are fortunate to be able to celebrate two truly inspirational role models in our community at Person of the Year,” noted Jackie Carrera, Santa Barbara Foundation President and CEO. “Elisabeth and Joe exemplify what we aim to highlight with this event: those among us who are effecting positive change with their time and talents.”

The first Persons of the Year were Harold Chase in 1942 and Pearl Chase in 1956. The award was known as Man & Woman of the Year and held that name until 2020.

Ginger Salazar and Katina Zaninovich were last year’s awardees. Other recent recipients of the honor include Tom Parker, Catherine Remak, Michael & Marni Cooney, David Boyd, Jelinda DeVorzon, Ernesto Paredes, Joni Meisel, Janet Garufis, Jon Clark, Steve Lyons, Carol Palladini, Bill Cirone, Anne Smith Towbes, Ken Saxon, Patricia MacFarlane, Clifford W. Sponsel, Gerd Jordano, Cliff Lambert, John Daly and Judy Stapelmann, as well as Ed Birch and Vicki Hazard.

Persons of the Year are nominated by community members in recognition of their history of extraordinary service that represents a meaningful commitment to the community, addresses a real community need or enhances quality of life for a wide swath of the Santa Barbara-area community. Nominees may also be acknowledged for exemplary acts of generosity, kindness or innovation in the Santa Barbara area.

The 80th Person of the Year celebration is supported by Legacy Sponsors Montecito Bank & Trust and the Santa Barbara Foundation (also the Organizing Sponsor), Premier Media Sponsor Noozhawk, Gold Sponsor Cox Communications, Silver Sponsors Bartlett, Pringle & Wolf and Steve and Cindy Lyons, and Bronze Sponsors U.S. Bank and Katina Zaninovich.

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Elisabeth Fowler



Winner of the Association of Fundraising Professionals' Santa Barbara County Philanthropist of the Year award in 2021, Elisabeth Fowler has lived in Santa Barbara for 18 years. In that time, she has been an active supporter of several nonprofits focused on health care, conservation and education.

Ms. Fowler joined the Board of Trustees of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History in 2008, and served as chair from 2014 to 2016, which included the Museum's Centennial.

"Elisabeth's interest in education and her love for the natural world made her a perfect match with the Museum's mission," shared nominator Luke Swetland,

President and CEO of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

"The greatest gift Elisabeth has given the Museum year after year is the gift of her keen intellect and unflagging passion for our mission. To have Elisabeth on your Board is to have a civic leader who never mails it in... she is always prepared and thoughtfully engages in every discussion."

Ms. Fowler is also involved in service to the community through Laguna Blanca School, the alma mater of her four children, CALM, Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, White Buffalo Land Trust, Direct Relief, Freedom for Youth, and a Honduras-based HIV/AIDS health care program. She has also given generously to The Partnership for Resilient Communities to support installation of creek-fortifying steel nets in Montecito.

Joe Howell



Joe Howell is co-founder of Howell Moore & Gough, LLP: HMG Law, where he has helped establish and develop innumerable local companies. He has been in active service to the Santa Barbara-area business, education and athletic communities for 50 years.

Mr. Howell's energetic dedication to Santa Barbara County students, families and educators spans nearly a quarter century of service as an elected member of the County Board of Education.

His support of Partners in Education/Computers for Families includes over two decades of board service. He also co-chaired the endowment campaign for Computers for Families which has provided computer hardware and connectivity for low-income children since the 1990s.

"What stands out most about Joe is how he goes about his service. His process of helping is just as impactful as the goals he helps people and nonprofits reach," explained Partners in Education Executive Director Chelsea Duffy in her nomination of Mr. Howell.

“He takes each step with integrity. He builds real relationships. He chooses his words carefully. He asks about staff members’ families and remembers people’s names.”

Mr. Howell’s active support of local athletes is as vigorous and sustained as his commitment to education. For two decades he has served as a member of the Santa Barbara Athletic Round Table and Santa Barbara Athletic Association. And he has encouraged runners and triathletes of all ages on a one-to-one basis and by example through his own Ironman and marathon pursuits.

The process to select the 80th Persons of the Year began with open nominations from January 20 to February 24, 2023. Anyone in the community could nominate an individual, couple or family. Former recipients of the award reviewed the nominations and selected this year’s awardees on the morning of March 15, with input from nonprofit leaders.

Ms. Fowler and Mr. Howell will be honored at an in-person luncheon on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at the Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort Rotunda. Tickets to join the celebration may be purchased at SBFoundation.org/PYAwards.

About Santa Barbara Foundation

The Santa Barbara Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life throughout Santa Barbara County for all who live, work, play and visit here. Working in partnership with individuals, community organizations, nonprofits and government, the Foundation strives to address local communities’ most challenging needs. Recognizing that its work depends on the strength of the social sector, the Foundation is committed to the health and vitality of local nonprofits. Nearly every Santa Barbara County nonprofit organization and essential community project has been supported by the Foundation during its 94-year history. The Foundation connects those who give with those in need – and all who dream of stronger communities. To learn more, please visit SBFoundation.org.

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