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## 2022 Moraga Citizen of the Year, Karen Reed, honored at banquet

By Vera Kochan



Moraga Citizen of the Year, Karen Reed (center)  
with sister, Diane Lewis and son, Jeff Reed.

Photo Vera Kochan

After a two-year, COVID-mandated hiatus, the town had once again taken to honoring its latest Citizen of the Year, Karen Reed, at a May 6 banquet in the Soda Center at Saint Mary's College. The 42nd annual event was sponsored by SMC, Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley, Lamorinda Weekly, and Moraga Chamber of Commerce.

Reed was chosen for the honor by the Selection Committee which recognized her continual, broad scope of involvement through the years with regards to numerous organizations and community events within the town. Her tireless volunteerism with the Moraga Park Foundation, Summer Concert Series, Pear Festival, Moraga Valley Kiwanis, Crab/Lobster Fest, See's Candy fundraiser, Pear Harvest, daffodil planting, Fourth of July festivities, Park and Recreation Commission and Moraga Library, led her to be a hands-down choice for the award.

"I enjoy volunteering in many groups for the variety of new experiences," stated Reed. "Each time I learn new things about our town and meet new people. I like to know about my community, how it works and how it can be improved for our neighbors."

Reed's reaction to the tribute was one of surprise and honor to be included on the list of past recipients. Her family was happy about her achievement, and she noted that her sister and father, who is now 105-years old and retired in Florida, were also volunteers in their communities.

Moraga isn't the first municipality to benefit from Reed's endeavors. She was an Explorer Scout leader in the 1970s with IBM in Omaha. Teaching high school-aged Scouts the use of computers and programs in Basic allowed them to enter computer competitions - something she continued as she moved to different IBM locations.

The Reed family moved to Moraga in 1987, when her kids were toddlers. They grew up to attend Camino Pablo Elementary School, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School and Campolindo High School. "We moved to the Bay Area from New Jersey for job promotions for my husband and me," Reed recalled. "We chose Moraga for its great schools and for its sense of community. The town relies on its volunteers to support community projects through fundraising and hands-on efforts."

Reed's favorite volunteer project is the annual Pear Harvest. She said, "I hope that the harvest will continue as long as the old trees produce pears. The pear orchards are a living legacy for Moraga."

Master of Ceremonies for the evening was 2019's recipient Fred Weil who noted that Reed always credits others for their volunteer work, "that's how humble you are."

Other tributes came from Chamber President Gian Panetta who mentioned that "someone like Karen brings so many good qualities to Moraga."

SMC's Ryan Thompson stated, "Just about every one of your contributions has helped my family. The summer concerts are like experiencing Woodstock in our own backyard." He admitted to buying way too many pear pies and boxes of See's Candy.

Kiwanis President Leslie Engler explained that Reed's "quiet work behind the scenes made the quality of life enjoyable in Moraga. I can testify that there's no job too tough or too nasty for Karen to take on."

"Karen Reed epitomizes selfless service above all else," praised Moraga Mayor Renata Sos. "She is unfailingly modest and humble; without any expectation of applause or recognition."

Representatives from County Supervisor Candace Andersen, Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, and Congressman Mark DeSaulnier also sang Reed's praises and presented plaques.

"You don't know Karen until you've worked side-by-side with Karen in Kiwanis," complimented good friend, Tim Freeman. "Her greatest contribution has been her leadership."

Reed wrapped up the evening with her own personal reflections, "The town of Moraga is a very special place. It would be nice if we could give out awards every day, because that's how many volunteers there are in town."

Unfortunately for Moraga, Reed is retiring to South Carolina this month to live near her sister. Being named 2022 Moraga Citizen of the Year is a coincidental, yet apropos, send-off.

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