



Volunteer of the Year: Winnie Moore

Winnie Moore has been named the 2023 Tennessee Iris Festival Volunteer of the Year.

Mrs. Moore has volunteered with the Iris Festival for many years, having served as the Tasting Party chairman for 20 years. She also enjoys volunteering each year at the Cemetery Walk. She serves as president of the Weakley County Office On Aging/Dresden Senior Center advisory board, is involved in the Weakley County Retired Teachers' Association and is very busy in the rebuilding efforts of her church, Dresden Cumberland Presbyterian.

She began her work in Weakley County as a University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension 4-H agent. She later transitioned to teaching before becoming principal of Dresden Elementary School, where she served for many years. Since retirement, she and her husband, Junior, have maintained farming operations.

Mrs. Moore is the mother of the late John Moore, LeAnne Moore Johnson (Colin) and the proud grandmother of Anna Johnson.

She is looking forward to working at the festival again this year and is hoping for a great crop of irises for the flower show.

Golden Iris: Kelley and Sheila Swearingen

Kelley Swearingen is a native of Dresden, who grew up at K and S Grocery owned and operated by his family.

He graduated from Dresden High School and received a bachelor of science degree from the University of Tennessee at Martin and an associate of science degree from John A. Gumpston College of Mortuary Science.

Swearingen has worked serving the public in various jobs, including assistant naturalist at Reelfoot Lake State Park, owner of K and S Grocery, managing partner of Dresden Dairy Queen and funeral director, embalmer and licensed insurance agent at Bowlin Funeral Home.

He has been a member of Dresden First Baptist Church for 60 years. He is a former member of the Dresden Fire Department, former member of Weakley County Election Counting Board, current Weakley County Election Commissioner, president of Woodmen Life Chapter 1149 and treasurer of the board of directors of Sunset Cemetery.

Sheila Swearingen is a native of Alamo. She graduated from Alamo High School and earned a bachelor of science degree from Union University. She was hired by the State Department of Correction as a probation officer and moved to Dresden in 1976. She worked with the courts and served in several north-west Tennessee counties.



She was appointed assistant commissioner with probation and parole by Gov. Don Sundquist and served from 1998-2003, ending her state career at Carroll Academy. She then worked many years at Bowlin Funeral Home as a licensed funeral director.

Mrs. Swearingen serves as secretary for the Office on Aging advisory board and treasurer of Woodmen Life Chapter 1149.

The couple are active members of First Baptist, serving on various committees such as house and grounds, nominating, teacher placement, hospitality and kitchen and they serve as co-directors of JOY (Just Older Youth). They are members of the AGAPE Sunday School Class. They both volunteer with Weakley County Backpack. Both have been active in the Weakley County Republican Party serving as president and vice president and they served as co-chairmen of the Tennessee Iris Festival in 1999 and 2000.

The Swearingens have been married 45 years. They are the parents of daughter, Shelley, a CPA with ATA, who also resides in Dresden.

They are both excited and honored to have been chosen to represent Dresden as 2023 Golden Iris.



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Citizen of the Year: Stephanie Kemp

Stephanie Kemp has been named Citizen of the Year.

The daughter of Stephen and Beverly Donoho, she has lived in Palmersville her entire life.

She earned the honor of being salutatorian of Palmersville High School in 1996. While in high school, she was a "social butterfly," being an active member of many clubs, playing basketball and making lifelong friends along the way. After graduation, she attended Murray State University and began working at Weakley County Bank. During her college years, she was a teller and loan officer before being promoted to branch manager.

On Nov. 1, 2000, she married the love of her life, Jamie Kemp, and they began their life together on Oliver Road, where they still reside today. Mrs. Kemp graduated from Murray State University with a degree in interior design and began her dream of being a florist.

The couple bought The FlowerBox on the court square in Dresden in May 2002 and it quickly became her second home. The still newlyweds began to work. Over the next few years, they grew their family with the addition of a son and daughter. Brody, now 17, and Millie, now 13, were raised in the back room of The Flower Box until they began school in Dresden.

Her family took top priority. She took a behind the scenes role to support their interests. She helped out where she could with the Palmersville Volunteer Fire Department, Masonic Lodge, Dresden Elementary PTO, Dyer County Clay Target Team and 4-H Archery, while still enjoying her hobbies of cooking; gardening; anything craft-related such as painting and drawing; and her new found interest of beekeeping. Consequentially, she recently became a member of the Northwest Tennessee Beekeepers Association. Mrs. Kemp and her family are members of Dresden First United Methodist Church, where she serves on several committees. She is also secretary and treasurer for Old Bethel Cemetery.

On Dec. 10, 2021, the entire Town of Dresden turned a corner that no one was prepared for. As one of the many businesses and homes that were lost in the tornado, we all found what it was like to come together as a community. Mrs. Kemp's whole world changed after the devastating tornado tore through Dresden. The storm leveled not only her business, but her church. Like so many other residents, she did not know where to start in the recovery. All the friends she has made throughout her life that came to help were a true blessing. After the outpouring of love and support that was shown to her, she decided to try to pay it forward. She has spent the last several months volunteering and trying to start the rebuilding and clean up around downtown Dresden. It is a true honor for her to be named Citizen of the Year. She hopes to be as good of a citizen as the people of Dresden have been to her.



Spirit of the Iris: Joy Oliver Adams

Joy Oliver Adams was born and raised in Dresden, graduating from Dresden High School in 1975. That fall she began a career in banking, working for Weakley County Bank for 12 years and on to work 33 years for Greenfield Banking Company until her retirement in March of 2022. She is a member of Greenfield Church of Christ.

In 1984, she married Richard Adams. He was a lineman and worked for Weakley County Municipal Electric System for 42 years until his retirement in July 2020. The couple made their home in the Liberty Community just outside of Dresden and were happily married for 38 ½ years until his passing in August 2022. Their union was blessed with a daughter, Marla Adams Rook and a son, Clay Porter Adams. Mrs. Rook and husband, Doug, live in Palmersville with their children, Addie and Mason. She is a University of Tennessee at Martin graduate and teaches pre-K at Dresden Clay Adams and wife, Rupa, live in Cordova. He is a Rhodes College graduate and is an accountant for Silver Tree Residential LLC in Memphis.

In years past, Mrs. Adams has volunteered for the American Cancer Society, the Heart Fund and the Dresden Youth Football League. She has served as PTO president, secretary for the Booster Club and leader of Brownie Scouts and Junior Girl Scouts and served on various school committees. She was also a past member of the Tennessee Iris Festival executive board and helps with the flower show each year. She was in charge of building a float for the very first parade in 1980 and has attended every parade since.

Mrs. Adams plans to stay active and involved in the community. Recently she was appointed to fill her husband's position as a director on the board for the Weakley County Municipal Electric System. She loves spending time with her family and friends, to travel whenever possible and to attend sporting events — especially to watch her grandson play ball and to help cheer on the Dresden Lions as her granddaughter is a middle school cheerleader.

"I love our little town of Dresden, its people and all things Iris. I look so forward to the Iris Festival each and every year, enjoying all of the events and spending time with friends. It is truly an honor to be selected to receive the Spirit of the Iris Award and I would like to thank the Tennessee Iris Festival executive board for all the hard work they do to make the festival happen," Mrs. Adams said.



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