

Statement in Support
of Award of
Member, Order of Distinguished Meritorious Service

Membership in the Order of Distinguished Meritorious Service is awarded for sustained exceptional service over a long period of years, and not necessarily awarded each year. It is awarded to a person who: (a) is a current or former active delegate to the Federation; (b) has made an outstanding contribution to Arlington County over an extended period of time; and (c) exemplifies the citizen activist as a positive element in community life.

In support of this year's selection, let me repeat what we said about last year's recipients of both the Journal Cup and the Distinguished Meritorious Service award, which is that this person personifies what Ronald Reagan meant when he said, "If you don't care who gets the credit, you can get a lot done."

This person was born in the heartland of America, and grew up in Virginia.

The person went to school at George Washington University.

This person retired from the Federal government, and also served as president of a civic association as well as being a civic activist on numerous activities. The person has been a delegate as long as most people can remember.

The above comments could probably describe any number of people here this evening. Consequently, our selection for the 2004 Distinguished Meritorious

Service award does not yet know who they are. With the next set of remarks, though, you will begin knowing who will become the 21st member of the prestigious Order of Distinguished Meritorious Service.

The person was born in Chicago, grew up in Fredericksburg, and as a child made frequent visits to his grandfather's house in Arlington, which is 3 blocks from where he now lives

He entered the Diplomatic Corps in 1966, and served in Vietnam and in Paris. Later, he joined the Export Import Bank where worked on projects in various parts of the world. After retiring from the Federal government, he briefly resurfaced as a computer network technician.

He has been a long-term bicycle advocate. He founded the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, and his helmet information has been featured by newspapers, magazines, TV, schools, and consumer organizations. Consequently, it is no surprise to see him bicycling to Civic Federation meetings, even when those meetings are held in the dead of winter.

Among his lesser known accomplishments include: for many years, he played the bagpipes in the Washington Scottish Pipe Band, and sometimes can even be heard in the Barcroft 4th of July parade; plays bluegrass mandolin in the little heard "Swart Brothers Band;" loves traveling on his tandem bicycle, especially in France where he loves to eat; and last but not least, makes all his own bread, roasts his own coffee beans, and makes a mean latte.

By now, most of you know who this is, but let me list his Federation accomplishments:

He has been an active delegate for many, many years.

He was president of the Federation.

He has served on the Executive Committee.

He is the Federation's webmaster. For those who are not frequent visitors to the website, to say the least, it is content-rich. Some might think it's his full-time job.

He is largely responsible for developing the Federation's County Fair booth, and now helps staff it each year.

He has been a major contributor to the Federation's annual delegate orientation sessions.

He has served for many years on the Revenues & Expenditures Committee. People have lost track of the committees he has served on, both Federation and county committees, but some of these include Columbia Pike revitalization, infill development, neighborhood traffic calming, and the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee.

Randy Swart is the 21st winner of the Order of Distinguished Meritorious Service.