



Press Release - For Immediate Release

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Holiday Happenings Committee Announces 2019 Robert N. Pursel Awards for Community Service

Danville—The Holiday Happenings committee for 2019 is very pleased to announce **Joanne Aurand**, her late husband, **Robert**, and **The Thomas Beaver Free Library** as our honorees for the 24th annual Robert N. Pursel Award to be presented on **Saturday, November 2, 2019**, 6:00pm at the Pine Barn Inn. Significant and meritorious community service is the focus of this award. Our community remains blessed with people and organizations exemplifying contributions consistent with the example of the award's namesake.

Joanne Aurand and her late husband, Robert, represent the life-long service and care for the community that Robert Pursel exemplified in his life. While reviewing the qualities of leadership, character and service reflected in the nomination of Joanne, it became evident that we would be remiss in not including her late husband in this nomination. Both had distinguished careers in education—she as a teacher for 28 years and he as a teacher and then administrator, both in the Danville Area School System. In addition, they both were heavily involved in volunteer roles on a day-to-day basis throughout their lives.

Both served as volunteers throughout their lives. If you wonder who kept clothes and food in her desk drawer for children who needed it; was a Den Mother for Cub Scouting; taught adults to read; was a member of and Treasurer for the League of Women Voters; served as Director of the Danville/Riverside Food Bank; was the business owner of “The Kiddie Korner” for over 50 years; was on the American Red Cross Board of Directors for the Danville chapter and shopped for state hospital patients—think Joanne. If you wonder who helped establish Little League in Danville; was the Executive Secretary of the Danville YMCA; assisted in establishing the Sunnybrook Basketball Camp; was a member of the Board of Directors of the Danville Area Community Center; was a member and past President of the Danville Lions Club and was a member of the Elks—think Bob. Both have been congregants and members of the church committee, with Bob serving as Treasurer at Shiloh United Church of Christ for many decades.

Joanne continues her volunteerism, and though Bob departed this world in 2003, his service continues to pay dividends for his community to this day.

The Thomas Beaver Free Library is in a more than 130-year-old building, centrally located in Danville. Under the leadership of Director Kathleen McQuiston and the Board of Trustees, the Library strives to carry out the mandates of its mission:

The Thomas Beaver Free Library offers the citizens of Montour County, Rush Township, and Riverside Borough educational and social opportunities by providing material, services and programs for all. We encourage lifelong learning and intellectual curiosity in our diverse community by connecting people and ideas in a welcoming and inclusive space.

It provides hours of service on Monday through Saturday. They provide diverse and expanding programming for children and adults. Patrons can checkout books, magazines, newspapers, and movies as well as having access to e-books and audio books. Meeting rooms are available to community groups and the library is home to the Montour County Genealogical Society. The Library has built community bonds beyond its walls by reaching out through “Little Libraries” and reading to children at preschools and assisted living centers.

Since August of 1888, the Thomas Beaver Free Library has been an indispensable site for life-long learning and has influenced and enhanced life in Danville and surrounding communities. The library is committed to responding to the current needs of the community by providing access to technology, information, and space for people that otherwise would not have access. It is through reading, access to information and social interaction that we acquire knowledge and a better understanding of our past, present, and future. This is what has been provided and will continue to be provided by the staff and volunteers of the Thomas Beaver Free Library.

The **November 2nd Holiday Happenings** event will once again feature auction items such as one-of-a-kind art pieces, jewelry, gift baskets, and exciting event tickets. Mark your calendars for an evening of great fun and dining out with your neighbors to benefit current needs in our community through the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Fund of the Danville Area Community Foundation.

For reservation, donation, or sponsorship information, visit csgiving.org/holiday-happenings, or contact: Joanne Benjamin at 570-594-4664 or Mike Benjamin at 570-847-7730.

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