



# Faces AND Places

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 30, 2021**

## **DUNBAR RESIDENT WORKS HARD TO KEEP HIS TOWN CLEAN, NAMED APRIL FAYETTE 'FACE'**

**Uniontown, PA** – Anyone who drives through Dunbar with any regularity is most likely familiar with Tony Whipkey, even if they haven't met him. He is often seen alongside various roads in the small borough, wearing gloves and hauling trash bags as he picks up debris in and around his town.

"He is a godsend," Dunbar Mayor Andy Lowry said. "For years, he's done it, and not only here in the borough. You never know where you'll see Tony. He's just one of those good all-around guys."

In fact, Whipkey's contributions are appreciated by so many that he recently drew notes of thanks on social media from the borough itself, as well as from Fayette County Commissioner Scott Dunn, another Dunbar native. A quilting group at a Dunbar church even made him a special quilt as a thank-you.

For his efforts in keeping his hometown clean, Whipkey has been named April's "Face" in the Fayette County Faces and Places series.

Whipkey, who was formerly employed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, always has deemed it important to keep the environment clean.

"It started a long time ago. When we were on jobs when I was working, maybe during breaks or on lunch, I'd pick up a couple bags (of trash) and throw them on the truck," he said. "I'd clean up the area where we were working."

Since his retirement in 2013, he has stepped up his efforts.

"I try to do it every year," he said. "I'm working on Pechin Road right now. It's pretty bad."

Whipkey said he typically picks up trash on Dunbar and Pechin roads, as well as Ferguson Road. He often gets his trash bags from friends at PennDOT, though he said supplies are a little harder to come by since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aside from an occasional helper now and then, Whipkey said he works alone, simply because his employment with PennDOT taught him about safety procedures that not everyone knows.

"I worked 20-some years with the state. I'm familiar with the highway conditions and stuff," he said, noting that he is nervous about asking for help from those less experienced with such conditions. "It can be dangerous if you don't know safety."

Whipkey said he takes a number of precautions when he is out clearing debris from roadsides.

"I listen for traffic when I'm in bad places, or along a shoulder that's real tight," he said. "I try to wear orange if I have it ... I know what to look for, anyhow."

Dunbar Borough council member Diana Homer said Whipkey's community-mindedness doesn't just revolve around picking up trash.

"Tony does a good deed every day," she said. "From giving doughnuts to Dilly Bars, and every Sunday, he gives every child a sucker in their baskets when the children collect pennies in church after the children's message. He will also give veggies to people out of his garden, or you might find potatoes on your porch, and you know where they're from. I have never heard Tony talk negative about anything. Tony cares about his town and helping anyone he can."

Whipkey said it is nice to know that people appreciate his efforts. He said people often stop to say thank you or give him a bottle of water or Gatorade or a bit of cash to buy supplies. Some have even given him gift cards.

"It really does make you feel good," he said.

The accolades are especially appropriate at this time of year. April is National Volunteer Month, and many communities around the county have organized volunteer clean-up days for either the end of this month or early in May. In addition, the county recently opened its new Recycling Convenience Center in Uniontown.

But to Whipkey, cleaning up is just something he felt he could and should do.

"When I retired, I said, 'You know what, I can give back,'" he said. "They treated me good. I have a good retirement. This is just my way of giving back."

To learn more about Fayette County, visit [www.FayetteCountyPA.org](http://www.FayetteCountyPA.org).

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For more information, contact Kristi Rooker Kassimer, Public Relations Specialist, at 412-691-0262, [kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info](mailto:kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info) or Jamie Rankin, Journalist, at 724-434-4486, [jamierankin13@gmail.com](mailto:jamierankin13@gmail.com).