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**FLEETWOOD'S FINEST SPRING GALA ANNOUNCES
2027 HONOREES FOR THE FLEETWOOD CADILLAC AWARD
AND FLEETWOOD HOMETOWN HERO AWARDS**

Fleetwood Bank to Receive Fleetwood Cadillac Award
for Outstanding Community Service
Betty & Ray Buss, Michael Mayer and William Strause Named Hometown Heroes

FLEETWOOD, PA — Friends of Fleetwood Parks is proud to announce the 2027 recipients of Fleetwood's Finest, a biennial celebration recognizing the individuals and organizations whose dedication, generosity and community spirit have helped make Fleetwood a special place to call home.

Fleetwood Bank will be the recipient of the **2027 Fleetwood Cadillac Award** for Extraordinary Community Service. The award recognizes a local business or organization that has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to supporting Fleetwood and the people who call it home.

Fleetwood Bank has been part of the fabric of the Fleetwood community for more than a century. Founded in Fleetwood in 1907, the bank has grown alongside the community, serving generations of families, businesses and organizations while remaining deeply connected to its hometown roots. Through changing times, Fleetwood Bank has continued a tradition of personal service, local leadership and community involvement. Its long history is not only measured in years, but in the relationships, it has built and the role it has played in helping Fleetwood grow and prosper for generations.

The 2027 Fleetwood Hometown Hero Awards will be presented to **Betty and Ray Buss, Michael Mayer** and **William Strause** in recognition of their outstanding commitment to the Fleetwood community. Each of this year's honorees has made a lasting difference through service, volunteerism, leadership and a willingness to give back. Their contributions represent the very best of Fleetwood and the community spirit that has helped shape the borough for generations.

"For more than 150 years, Fleetwood has been built by people who understand that a strong community doesn't just happen—it takes people willing to give their time, talents and resources to make a difference," said Friends of Fleetwood Parks President **Patty Keeney**. "Our 2027 Fleetwood's Finest honorees are wonderful examples of that spirit, and we are excited to give our community the opportunity to celebrate them."

"We are truly honored to receive the Fleetwood Cadillac Award. For more than a century, Fleetwood Bank has been proud to call this community home, and giving back has always been at the heart of

who we are. This recognition belongs to every member of our team—past and present—who has volunteered their time, supported local organizations and worked every day to make a difference. Fleetwood has supported us for generations, and we believe it is our responsibility and privilege to give that support back. To be recognized by our hometown for that commitment is especially meaningful” stated **Timothy P. Snyder**, President & CEO, Fleetwood Bank.

The honorees will be recognized at the **Fleetwood’s Finest Spring Gala** on **Saturday, April 3, 2027**, at the **Fleetwood Fire Company Social Quarters Banquet Hall**. The special evening will bring together friends, family, community leaders and supporters to celebrate the honorees and their contributions to Fleetwood. The gala will feature Red Carpet Arrivals, Dinner, Tributes, Desserts and Dancing to **Erich Cawalla and the Uptown Band**, creating a memorable evening of celebration and community pride.

Fleetwood’s Finest was created to shine a spotlight on the people and organizations who work behind the scenes to strengthen the community, support their neighbors and preserve the qualities that make Fleetwood unique. Tickets and more information are available at www.fleetwoodparks.com. VIP tickets are \$75 and include an exclusive Cocktail Hour with the Honorees. General admission tickets are \$50. The Fleetwood’s Finest Spring Gala will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the Fleetwood Fire Company Social Quarters Banquet Hall on Franklin Street in Fleetwood.

Fleetwood’s Finest is sponsored by Friends of Fleetwood Parks, Breakfast Brothers, Hurston/Schaeffer and AnitaTrinket.

The Fleetwood Finest Gala Committee is comprised of residents, volunteers and businesses of Fleetwood. The committee includes Donna Fick, Jessica Galeassi – Fleetwood Bank, Patty Keeney – Friends of Fleetwood Parks, Connie Jo Keller, Lynn Kopicz, Joel & Kelly Schaeffer, Belinda Stoudt – Fleetwood Vol. Fire Co. and Anita Tempesco – ANITATrinket.

THE FLEETWOOD CADILLAC AWARD FLEETWOOD BANK

For more than a century, Fleetwood Bank has been a cornerstone of the Fleetwood community, growing alongside the people and businesses it serves. Its story began on December 7, 1907, when The First National Bank in Fleetwood opened its doors with \$20,000 in deposits. By 1921, the Bank had established its home at the corner of Main and Franklin Streets, beginning a long history of investment in the heart of Fleetwood.

Through the decades, the Bank continued to grow and evolve while remaining firmly rooted in the community. From early innovations such as drive-up banking and its first in-house computer and ATM, to the introduction of online and mobile banking, Fleetwood Bank has continually adapted to better serve its customers. Its reach also expanded with offices in Kutztown, Lyons, Blandon, Shoemakersville, Wyomissing and Oley.

In 2006, The First National Bank in Fleetwood became Fleetwood Bank, marking a new chapter in its history while maintaining the local identity and community commitment that had defined it for generations. Today, Fleetwood Bank's story is one of more than a century of growth, innovation and service—a hometown institution that has remained deeply connected to the communities it serves.

THE HOMETOWN HERO AWARD

BETTY BUSS

Betty (Phillips) Buss has devoted a lifetime to nursing, faith, family, volunteerism, and service to others. Born in Hickory Corners in 1936, Betty graduated from Mahanoy Joint High School in 1954 and later completed the three-year R.N. diploma program at the Geisinger Hospital School of Nursing.

Betty met Ray Buss in 1957, beginning a courtship that continued despite Ray's teaching assignments overseas. They married in 1959, and Betty joined Ray in the Philippines, where she volunteered as a nurse at the Navy hospital. The couple eventually settled in Fleetwood in 1964, where they raised their four children.

Betty quickly became an active part of the community. She provided 13 years of leadership with Camp Fire and more than 50 years of Sunday School teaching. A longtime member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, she participated in the church choir and has served for 25 years in volunteer parish nursing.

Her professional nursing career included work at Reading Hospital and 28 years at the KUP Student Health Center. Betty has also volunteered at the Lutheran Home at Topton and other local nursing facilities and is a 10-gallon blood donor.

Through decades of quiet service and dedication to others, Betty has made a lasting difference in Fleetwood and beyond.

RAY BUSS

Ray Buss dedicated his life to education, athletics, and creating opportunities for young people. A graduate of Penn State with bachelor's and master's degrees, Ray served in the U.S. Marines before beginning a distinguished career as a teacher and coach.

After teaching and coaching in Pennsylvania, Japan, and the Philippines, Ray came to Fleetwood High School in 1964, where he taught and coached varsity basketball and boys' soccer. He helped establish the Fleetwood Youth Soccer Club around 1970, creating opportunities for generations of young athletes.

Ray's remarkable soccer career included PIAA State Championships in 1978 and 1980, nine Berks County Coach of the Year honors, two Pennsylvania State Coach of the Year awards, and National Secondary Coach of the Year in 1980. He was inducted into the National Soccer Hall of Fame, Berks County Sports Hall of Fame, and Pennsylvania State Sports Hall of Fame.

His commitment to athletics extended beyond coaching. Ray spent 54 years as a baseball umpire at the Little League, high school, and college levels and held leadership roles in numerous professional and community organizations.

Ray retired from Fleetwood High School in 1991 with an extraordinary career soccer record of 512-99-42. His legacy continues through the countless young people he inspired and the Fleetwood facilities that proudly bear his name. Ray retired from Fleetwood High School in 1991 after an extraordinary coaching career, finishing with an impressive 512-99-42 record. But Ray's legacy was about far more than wins and losses. He shaped generations of young athletes, teaching them the importance of teamwork, determination, sportsmanship, and pride in their community.

Ray passed away in 2021, but his presence is still deeply felt throughout Fleetwood. His name lives on through the facilities that proudly honor him, in the soccer tradition he helped build, and, most importantly, in the countless players and families whose lives he touched. Ray Buss didn't simply coach soccer in Fleetwood—he helped make it part of the heart and spirit of the community. His legacy will continue for generations to come.

MICHAEL MAYER

Michael Mayer has been a proud resident of Fleetwood his entire life, building a remarkable legacy of service to his family, community, schools, and country.

Born in 1957 to George and Barbara Mayer, Michael grew up on East Locust Street and graduated from Fleetwood High School in 1975. An active student, he participated in soccer, basketball, baseball, golf, cross country, band, and school musicals and became Fleetwood High School's first drum major.

Just three weeks after graduation, Michael began serving his country in the United States Air Force. Following training, he was stationed at Dover Air Force Base with the 9th Military Airlift Squadron, where he also helped organize squadron athletic teams. He completed his service in 1979 and returned home to build his career and continue serving his community.

Michael's lifelong love of sports has made a lasting impact on generations of young people. Since 1980, he has served as a PIAA soccer official, working five State Championship games along with numerous District III and Berks County championships. He has also coached girls and boys basketball and baseball at Fleetwood and currently serves as soccer assignor for the Berks County Interscholastic Athletic Association.

His community service extends far beyond athletics. Michael served four years on the Fleetwood School Board, currently serves on Fleetwood Borough Council, has been a member of the Breakfast Brothers since 1980, and serves as President of the Fleetwood Carnival.

Michael and his wife, Sharon, have shared nearly 50 years of marriage and are the proud parents of three children and grandparents of seven.

WILLIAM STRAUSE

William "Bill" Strause has spent a lifetime connected to the people, places, and history of Fleetwood. Born at Reading Hospital in 1949, Bill grew up in his father's neighborhood grocery store, where he learned at an early age the importance of community and knowing your neighbors.

A graduate of Fleetwood High School, Bill participated in Scouting and was active in music, playing clarinet in the high school band and baritone saxophone in the dance band. He graduated with honors from Lehigh University in 1971 with a B.S. in Civil Engineering and went on to a successful career with Metropolitan Edison, eventually becoming manager of the Transmission Engineering Department.

Bill married Carol Ann Gauker in 1972, and together they raised three daughters, Aubrey, Brooke, and Jordan. Throughout his life, Bill has maintained his love of music and continues to play clarinet with the Reading Philharmonic Band.

In retirement, Bill has combined his artistic talents with his passion for Fleetwood. His work includes stained glass, a Fleetwood Tiger, and murals at the Fleetwood Community Center.

Perhaps Bill's greatest contribution has been preserving and sharing the community's history. A longtime member of the Fleetwood Area Historical Society, he has digitized extensive collections of historic photographs and taken Fleetwood's story directly into the community through presentations to local organizations.

Bill is also the owner and caretaker of Fleetwood's historic 1775 grist mill, a property with deep connections to both his and his wife's families.

Through his creativity, historical preservation, and lifelong devotion to his hometown, Bill has helped ensure that Fleetwood's remarkable past is preserved and shared with generations to come.

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