

Social workers are honored for their devotion
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COMMUNITY *Retired UTA professor Wayne Duehn, who received a lifetime achievement award, says he has done community work for 40 years.

Ask Wayne Duehn what he did to earn a lifetime achievement award through a national social-work group for his **community** work in Arlington and he'll say he's "been around a long time."

"I've spent 40 years doing **community** work," said Duehn, a retired professor from the University of Texas at Arlington. "I never really planned my career. I just went with the flow."

Duehn, 71, is among five local people recently honored at the annual banquet of the North Central Texas Fort Worth Area Branch of the National Association of Social Workers-Texas.

Social workers help people in all stages of life and in all situations, from adoption to hospice care. They work in hospitals, schools, police departments, mental-health clinics, private practices and corporations, said Cathie McDonald, chairwoman of the association's Fort Worth-area branch.

They also often see the full impact of a larger social problem in a **community**, she said.

"Professional social workers just like Wayne Duehn are on the front lines, responding to human needs such as homelessness, poverty, family breakup ... and much more," McDonald said. "They also know that helping people and families navigate difficult life transitions may require 'changing the map' through **community** action."

The local organization, in tandem with the national group, strives to recognize individuals who have given their time to help others, said McDonald, who is a social worker. Duehn, who taught at UTA for 38 years, says the key to staying involved is maintaining a balance. He does lots of extracurricular activities in addition to his **community** work. "Some people have a clear mission, but I'm still growing up and trying to figure it out," he said. Though retired, he still does weekly presentations in his field.

McDonald said the group honors individuals inside and outside social work who exemplify social-work values and ethics. The criteria for award winners include making contributions of lasting impact, showing creativity and leadership, and providing quality of life in **communities** or social issues.

"In every **community**, there are people who go above and beyond their usual work to make a significant difference in the lives of thousands," McDonald said. Bill Russell is no stranger to giving back.

The **community** outreach coordinator for Tarrant County Commissioner Marti VanRavenswaay was honored as public citizen of the year. He has made it his mission to introduce **community** members in Arlington to the United Way's 211 information line. "I am passionate about helping people to understand when life overwhelms them that there are other people out in the **community** that can lend a helping hand," the retired Arlington police officer said.

He said that through the help of the Arlington Police Department, he has distributed 20,000 211 cards so that others can learn about the program.

Also honored were:

Betty McIlroy, program director at Union Gospel Mission in Fort Worth, was named social worker of the year. McIlroy has been with Union Gospel for more than 10 years. The mission serves the homeless and provides over 200,000 meals and shelter to more than 1,100 individuals a year, according to its website.

Alicia Barker, student of the year. Barker is a UTA student recognized for her leadership and commitment to social justice.

Criminal Court Judge Brent A. Carr, official of the year. The award recognizes the contributions of an elected official for leadership and formation of public policy, particularly policies that affect social justice, healthcare, education, civil and human rights, and social practice.

The awards are given yearly, usually around National Social Worker Month, which is observed each March.

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