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## Five to be honored for civic leadership

By Ken Roberts / City Editor

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Each year, the Civic Hall of Fame honors people whose actions have made an impact on the quality of life in Tuscaloosa County.

Five people have been chosen this year to join the elite list of exceptional citizens who have made significant, long-term contributions to the development of Tuscaloosa County.

Organizations, businesses and individual citizens submitted nominations for the 2017 class to the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama. The nominations were reviewed by a committee and honorees were selected.

The Civic Hall of Fame was born during the chamber's 100th anniversary year in 2000. With this class, 108 citizens will have been inducted as members of the Hall of Fame.

The 2017 honorees will be inducted at 4 p.m. Oct. 19 at the Alberta Center of Performing Arts, 2700 University Blvd. E. There is no cost to attend the event.

Here are this year's honorees:

### **Susan Phifer Cork (1953-)**

A lifelong resident of Tuscaloosa, Cork attended the Tuscaloosa City School system and the University of Alabama. With her family, she is part of the leadership of Phifer Inc.

Although she has a busy career working alongside her husband and sisters at Phifer, Cork is committed to an active role in community service, serving as chairwoman of the United Way of West Alabama Alexis de Tocqueville Society, past chairwoman of the board of directors of Christ Episcopal Church preschool, sustaining member of Junior League of Tuscaloosa, and on numerous other boards and committees.

She was instrumental in raising money for and developing the Tuscaloosa Children's Center, and was part of the Alabama Department of Mental Health's first Historical Committee, which was established to formulate a restoration and preservation plan for the historic portion of Bryce Hospital.

In 2016, Cork was named a Pillar of West Alabama by the Community Foundation of West Alabama. Along with her husband, Brad, she was selected as the recipient of the 2015 Family of the Year by the United Way of West Alabama Alexis de Tocqueville Society.

### **Arlington L. Freeman (1934-2003)**

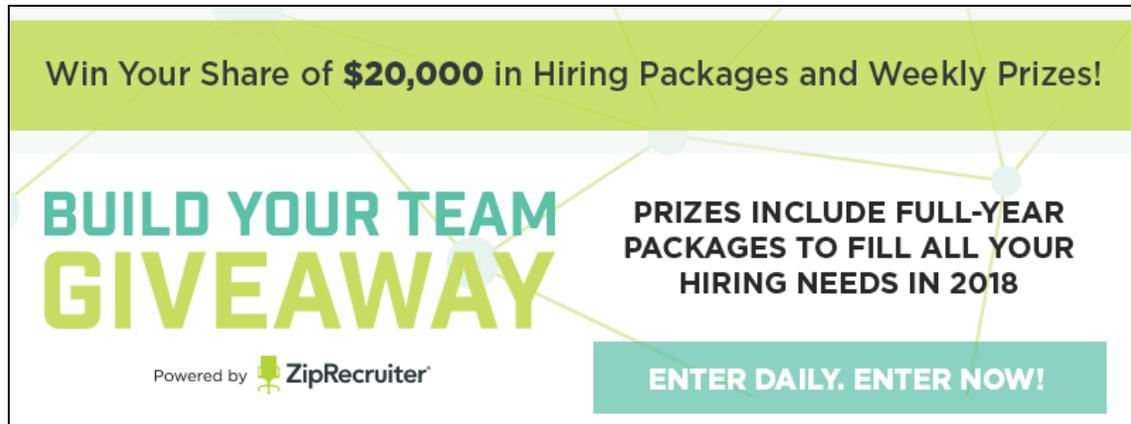
Born in in Fayette County, Freeman received his education at the Fayette County Training School, Stillman College and Alabama State University.

A longtime employee of what began as the Tuscaloosa City Recreation Department, Freeman showed a devotion to providing recreational opportunities to all areas of the community, but particularly in the West End of Tuscaloosa. Freeman initiated and guided the development of Palmore Park, a 175-acre development in west Tuscaloosa. He also directed youth and sports programs for all ages. In 1996, Community Center Park in West End was renamed A.L. Freeman Park.

Freeman was also involved with the American Red Cross, the Murphy African American Museum and the Drug Prevention Task Force Committee. He served as senior commissioner with the Tuscaloosa Youth Development Council and was an advisory member of the Tuscaloosa County Sheriff's Department-Juvenile Division.

Freeman earned numerous awards, including the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Man of Distinction. Feb. 20, 1996, was proclaimed by the city of Tuscaloosa as "A.L. Freeman Day."

#### **Frank Michael Reilly (1954-)**



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By the time Reilly was born in Montgomery, his father had been killed in a military airplane crash. The youngest of four children with a working mother, Reilly had ample unsupervised time after school, at night, on weekends and during summer breaks. He spent much of that time at the South YMCA in Montgomery, where he encountered role models and learned the lessons of public service and the value of volunteerism.

Reilly has since served on the Tuscaloosa YMCA board of directors for decades, working to raise money for the new YMCA building and also serving as the chairman of the board. He followed in the footsteps of his mentor, Pettus Randall, III, in investing time in the Tuscaloosa community. As CEO of Randall-Reilly, he participated in several capital campaigns, including the effort to raise \$6.5 million for a new building for St. Francis of Assisi University Parish.

Reilly's interest in aiding children led him to help the Boys and Girls Clubs of Tuscaloosa, joining with other community leaders in resolving problems and ensuring the organization offers young people a safe place to learn after school and during the summer.

In 2011, the Reilly family was named the Alexis de Toqueville Society Family of the Year, due in large part to Reilly's efforts to recruit new members to the society. Because of the society, more than 7,000 local children are served annually by the United Way's Success by Six, Jump Start and Dolly Parton Imagination Library programs.

#### **Betty Shirley (1927-)**

As a young adult, Shirley suffered from mental illness and was successfully treated at Bryce Hospital. After her recovery, she spoke openly about mental illness to civic organizations and churches and became an advocate for mental health treatment and education. Families in crisis call upon her for information, to be a listening ear and to provide hope.

As a mental health advocate, she has served on the board of Friends of Bryce and served as co-chairwoman of the Hospital Ball of Druid City Hospital to raise money for a mental health wing. She was also a fundraiser and member of the board of Counseling Ministry Professionals.

Shirley was named the Outstanding Member of the Mental Health Association in 1990, was named a “Point of Light” by President George H.W. Bush, and in 2002, the psychiatric clinic at the University of Alabama School of Medicine was named in her honor.

She is also involved in the Rise Center and Crossing Points, and both programs have grown in funding and support thanks to her efforts.

### **Jimmy Warren (1954-)**

Born in Jasper, Warren moved from the family farm in Walker County to Holt when he was six months old so his father could start a job as a forklift driver at the Central Foundry. His mother quilted and canned vegetables to help support the family.

In school, Warren was selected at Eastwood Junior High’s most outstanding student when he was in the ninth grade. At Tuscaloosa High School, he was one of the school’s outstanding seniors, and was editor of the Black Warrior. He worked three jobs to pay for college and graduated magna cum laude.

Warren worked at Creative Displays and TotalCom, and in 1983, bought TotalCom and became its president. In the more than three decades since, TotalCom has grown to be a regional firm and represents clients throughout the Southeast. Through his agency, Warren has donated hundreds of hours of pro bono work to various charitable organizations.

Additionally, Warren has taken a range of leadership roles, both in a civic capacity and in his industry. He served as president of the Tuscaloosa Advertising Federation and governor of the district, serving on the national board and elected to the Council of Governors. He was inducted into the American Advertising Federation Seventh District’s Hall of Fame and received the Barton Cummings Gold Medal, the American Advertising Federation’s highest award.

He is a founding director and serves on the advisory board of the Bank of Tuscaloosa, and served in various roles with the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, including being instrumental in the creation of the Civic Hall of Fame. Warren was Member of the Year in 2000 and received the Chamber’s Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009.

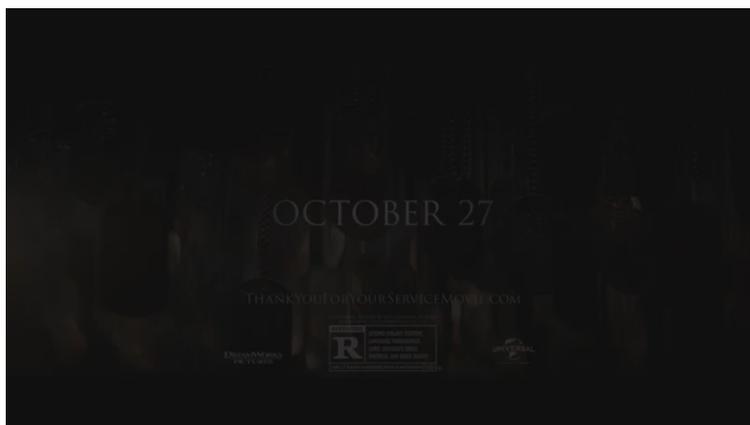
Warren served on the city of Tuscaloosa’s Planning and Zoning Commission for 16 years and was chair for eight years. He serves on the board of the Tuscaloosa Public Library and has served as a board member for the Tuscaloosa County Park and Recreation Authority and a division chair for United Way, among many other boards. A loyal supporter of the University of Alabama, he is a member of the President’s Cabinet and the board of visitors of the College of Communication and Information Sciences.



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