Cutright to be inducted into NC Ohio Hall of Excellence

At a recent board meeting of the Ashland County Community Foundation, executive director/CEO Jim Cutright was paid a surprise visit by Chris Copper, executive director of the North Central State College Foundation, to announce his forthcoming induction into the prestigious North Central Ohio Hall of Excellence.

Cutright was selected from a pool of nominees, with the support of letters of recommendation from City of Ashland Mayor Matt Miller, North Central Ohio Workforce Alliance Director Erv Howard, community leaders Barbie Lange, president of the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce, Jim Hess and Ken Milligan, both past ACCF board chairs, Dennis Miller, vice president of Sutton Bank and Ashland City Council member, the current ACCF board chair, Peggy Yoder and the entire ACCF staff.

This honor is reserved for “residents of Ashland, Crawford, Richland, Knox and Huron counties whose vision, creativity, boldness of purpose and community involvement exemplify excellence in our region” and “have demonstrated a commitment to the community through leadership, by giving of personal time and/or resources.” Of the over 50 regional awards made to-date, the only prior Ashland County recipients are Robert Archer, Dr. Lucille Ford and Mike Goschinski.

Mayor Miller lauded Cutright’s contributions to community planning, mentorship and investment in young people and his facilitating of public-private partnerships. Hess commented, “I’ve worked with Jim on many projects, and I know him to be a man of integrity, creativity, collaboration and keeping the interests of our community in the forefront.”

Lange emphasized her support for “Cutty, as he is affectionately known”, enumerating his participation as a Chamber of Commerce board member, vice chair of the City of Ashland Targeted Action Plan Steering Committee, chair of the building committee for the Salvation Army Kroc Center, board member of the Taylor Family Foundation and past president of the Noon Lions Club, where he received a Governor’s Award and was named Lion of the Year.

Mr. Cutright has a long resume of active volunteerism in the Ashland community and beyond. In his former 32-year construction management career, as chief operating officer at Guenther Mechanical, Inc., he devoted personal time to serving as president of the Mechanical Contractors Association-NCO, a board member of Cleveland-based Associated Builders and Contractors, and as a management trustee on various multi-employer pension, health/welfare and apprenticeship committees.

Locally, in the late-1990’s, Jim with his friend, Randy Emmons, raised over $300,000 for Ashland High School athletics as co-presidents of the Arrows Booster Club. He would also go on to serve as Rotary Club president, receiving a Paul Harris award, as a Hospice-NCO board member, past president of the Country Club of Ashland, current president-elect of Young Men’s Business Club and as vice chair of the Ashland County Community Foundation board, from where he transitioned into his current leadership position in 2012, assuming the unenviable task of succeeding the venerable founding ACCF president, Dr. Lucille Ford.
In Yoder’s letter of recommendation, she stated, “Cutty is a hard-working individual and a man of character. He is very humble and gives credit to the board and staff, when many times the real credit belongs to him.” During Cutright’s seven-year tenure, ACCF’s assets have grown from $16.2 to $55 million, with the number of endowment funds nearly doubling from 246 to 483. He is also responsible for the creation of the IMPACT Youth Council, implementing numerous staffing alignments and managing the construction of a new office addition.

In his remarks of gratitude for this recognition, Jim stated, “As I’ve said before, I am a reluctant award recipient, but it is humbling for your efforts to have meaning to others, and of course, I’ve learned that accepting these honors shines a light on the collective work of our team at ACCF, which is extremely important to me.”

Cutright also commented that the most meaningful of all of the recommendations was the letter signed by the four young ladies on his staff, Kristin Aspin, Brittaney Reep, Lanie Hartge and Mindy Howman.

In it, they remarked, “Cutty is a friendly, generous, caring and humble boss. He lends support, guidance and direction while challenging staff and others to be the best they can be. He expects no less from himself. His leadership at the Foundation cannot be separated from his family values, life experience and standards of excellence. Cutty provides us with life lessons without intentional effort via conversations and interactions, as well as us simply observing his conduct at work and in the community.”

The North Central Ohio Hall of Excellence awards dinner and induction ceremony will occur on April 17, 2020 at the NCSC Kehoe Center in Shelby. If you have interest in attending, please contact ACCF’s offices at (419) 281-4733. For tickets, please contact Chris Copper, NCSC Foundation executive director at ccopper2@ncstatecollege.edu.