



### Perris Citizen of the Year Revealed at Annual Awards Dinner



Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez (left), former pro football player Anthony Prior and Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin (right) flank Andre Mitchell, who was honored as Perris Citizen of the Year on behalf of his work with youth.

A Los Angeles police officer who spent thousands of hours building recreational facilities for Perris youngsters was honored as the Perris Citizen of the Year this week.

Andre Mitchell, a member of the LA Police Department's fugitive squad, was honored for his work in creating the P-Town Combat Sports Academy and a youth football league at Patriot Park, said he was surprised and humbled by the honor.

He received a plaque in the shape of a football from former NFL player Anthony Prior, who attended the awards ceremony to make the presentation.

"I'm overjoyed and I'm so appreciative the City of Perris supports my programs so much," Mitchell said.

The organizations which honored volunteers or employees with plaques and certificated included the Police Department, the Val Verde Unified School District, the Perris Elementary School District, the Perris Union High School district, the library and various service clubs.

All honorees shared one thing in common, said Gary Sarjeant, who presided over the Thursday night ceremonies at Harrison Hall.

"They have excelled in the workplace or as volunteers and have made outstanding contributions to the City," Sarjeant said.

Mitchell has been working with Perris youngsters for year. He founded the Perris Valley Youth Association and worked with the City to create a football league that teaches the fundamentals of the sport, good sportsmanship and mentors at-risk youth.

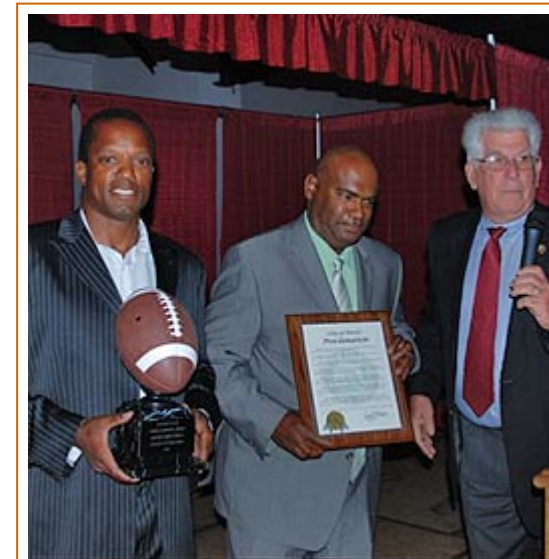
The Perris Valley Patriots play at Patriot Park. Earlier this year, Mitchell was a leading force in the creation of the P-Town Combat Sports Academy, which is expected to open in July. The academy will teach youngsters boxing and martial arts skills under the tutelage of trained pros.

Mitchell also has hosted several events featuring professional and former professional athletes. Prior, who formerly played with the Minnesota Vikings, New York Jets and Oakland Raiders in an 11-year career, said the Perris Patriots league has helped seven City youngsters obtain football scholarships at major universities.

He said Mitchell employs the "Three Ds—discipline, desire and dedication."



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers shared a moment with Mitchell.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch reads the proclamation honoring Mitchell while Anthony Prior prepares to present him with the Citizen of the Year Award.



Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley (left) with Prior and Mayor Daryl Busch offers congratulations to Andre Mitchell.

"He wants to give them the path to hope," Prior said.

City officials and elected representatives heaped praise on Mitchell during the awards' ceremony.

Mayor Daryl Busch called Mitchell's work in the community "very special" and said he represents the best of the community. Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough said Mitchell "demonstrates his real interest in the community by his outstanding and unmatched dedication to our kids."

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers said she could not think of a more deserving recipient.

"He is a most deserving honoree," she said.

Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin called Mitchell a "selfless man who has contributed a tremendous amount of time and resources for the children of this community."

Other organizations and honorees included:

- Perris police: Brad Riesland and Aaron Rico
- Friends of the Library: Pat Kelly
- Val Verde Unified School District: Carroll Brown, Dave Marshall and Robert Nichols
- Perris Elementary School District: Judy Joseph, Fran Perry and Charlene Busch
- Perris Union High School District: Cecelia Avilia and Diane Pursley
- Perris Union High School District: Teresa Grossi and Richard Wallis
- Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce: Pete Peterson
- Perris Community Partnership: Ruben Bajo and Ed Agundez
- Dora Nelson African American Art and History Museum: Norman Towels, Lorraine Stokes, Gloria Boyd, Marward Taylor, Gertrude Anne Burgin, Tony Austin, William Shorter, Lenwood Long, Gilbert and Yolanda Williams and Peggy Hooks
- Optimist Club: Sam and Fannie Green
- Rotary Club of Perris: Pete Peterson

[See photos from this event](#)