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Perris Honors Citizen of the Year

John Simmons took a cut in pay when he began volunteering for the Citizens on Patrol after moving to Southern California from Tennessee. While volunteering in Memphis, Simmons was paid \$1 a year.

In California, he receives not a penny for his work.

Doesn't matter. To Simmons, volunteering to assist the Perris Police Department is a labor of love. For his efforts, Simmons was named Perris Citizen of the Year and received proclamations and plaques from Mayor Daryl Busch, State Assemblyman Jose Medina and State Sen. Richard Roth.

"I'm truly honored and most appreciative to receive this award," Simmons said in remarks at Harrison Hall at the Lake Perris Fairgrounds, where the April 30th ceremony took place. "I enjoy what I do for the Perris Police Department very much. It's a great organization working in a great community. This is the first time that a recognition that is important to me has been given to me and I am honored and humbled to receive it."

Simmons began volunteering with the Citizens on Patrol in August 2008. His work encompasses several departments, including logistics, crime prevention, traffic and patrol. He has dedicated more than 7,000 hours of his time to the COP.



Perris Citizen of the Year John Simmons and his wife, Patricia, are flanked by Perris City Councilman David Starr Rabb, City Councilwoman Rita Rogers, Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke and Mayor Daryl Busch.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch led a contingent of elected officials to the awards ceremony, which included other civic, educational and professional organizations. Other Perris elected officials included Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke and City Councilmembers David Starr Rabb and Rita Rogers. Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley also attended. Busch said the awards show began as a tribute to the Perris Valley Rotary Club. It was a small affair.

"Combining all the awards makes this a much more prestigious program," Busch said. "It has turned into a very nice and very important event."

Busch said he was pleased to honor Simmons as the Perris Citizen of the Year.

"Lots of times good deeds go unrecognized," he said. "It's nice to acknowledge when they are done."

Burke said that volunteers like Simmons mean more time for sworn officers to handle law-enforcement duties. She believe volunteers working with police are one of the reasons Perris experienced a 25 percent drop in violent crimes last year.

"Volunteers are the backbone of the community," Burke said. "Volunteers help carry us along. We could not function without them."

Rabb agreed that volunteers like Simmons "save our City a lot of resources and contribute to making Perris a better place."

"I appreciate the service he brings to the Perris," Rabb said.

Rogers thanked the volunteers of all City groups, saying they "give their time, effort, expertise and enthusiasm and make an already great community even greater."

"They increase the success of all of our organizations," she said.

Lt. Charlie Wilhite, in remarks made as Simmons accepted his honor, called the retired Internet technology manager at a paper company "inspiring" and praised him for his "leadership and loyalty."

"John found his calling by becoming a volunteer for the Citizens on Patrol," Wilhite said.

Perris Police Chief Mike Judge wrote in recommending Simmons for the Citizen of the Year honor that he transports patrol vehicles to Murrieta for service, works DUI checkpoints, staffs crime-scene and traffic-accident perimeters and assists during the annual Christmas parade and "Shop with a Cop"

"He is an inspiration for community members to volunteer for the City of Perris," Judge said.



Perris Police Lt. Charles Wilhite, Citizen of the Year John Simmons and Perris Mayor Daryl Busch at the April 30 awards ceremony at Harrison Hall in Perris.

Other awardees honored during the Harrison Hall ceremony included:

- Paul Price; Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association.
- Tim Moore and Bill Bauer; Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 888
- Willie Moses; Perris Valley Women's Club.
- Joanne Evans and Jennifer Bieger; American Legion Post 595
- Peter Peterson; Perris Rotary Club
- Julio Reyes; Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Gloria Sanchez, Marty Rosen, Luz Gallegos, Yolanda Williams; Riverside County Supervisorial District 5
- Mary Vigneau, Cheryl Hoppe, Mae Minnich; Friends of the Library
- Garrett Owen, Juan Lopez; Val Verde Unified School District
- Cassie Hammond; Nuview Union School District
- Jodi Yager; Perris Elementary School District
- Julie Zierold, Irma Marmolejo, Joe Rodriguez, Angel Love Behrens, Ben Washburn, Audrey Smith, Jeff Perez, Steve Swartz; Perris Union High School District
- Josh Patterson, Ruben Martinez, Chris Mason; Riverside County Sheriff's Department

Media Contact

Joe Vargo
Public Information Officer
951-956-2120
jvargo@cityofperris.org



Perris City Hall
101 N. D Street
Perris, CA 92570

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