

# Mesa Chamber presents 2017 Annual Leadership Awards

By **Kelly Mixer** - April 25, 2017



*Craig Lohman, the 2016 chairman of the Mesa Chamber of Commerce, reviews the chamber's accomplishments for the past year. (Ted Wendel/MyNewsMesa.com)*

On April 21, the Mesa Chamber of Commerce hosted the 2017 Annual Leadership Awards to honor business excellence and leadership in Mesa.

The evening was highlighted with several touching moments like the presentation of the inaugural Peter Sterling Spirit of the Fight Award given to Susan Tong, owner and master baker at Sweet Susan's. Sterling, who served as president and chief executive officer of the Mesa Chamber of Commerce from 2011 to 2012, passed away in July 2016 after a courageous four-year battle with cancer. His family was present to see Tong honored Friday



*U.S. Army veteran David Campbell and his service dog, Caleb, received the Mesa Chamber Volunteer of the Year Award. (Ted*

evening. See: <http://mynewsmesa.com/mesa-champion-gone-too-soon/>.

*Wendel/MyNewsMesa.com)*

"I know he's looking down on us and is so proud Susan is getting this award," said Sterling's wife, Megan, vice president of the East Valley Partnership.

The Teacher of the Year was awarded posthumously to Mesa High School math teacher Ryne Zahner, who was found shot to death in his Tempe backyard in January. See: <http://mynewsmesa.com/police-search-suspect-killed-beloved-mesa-high-school-math-teacher/>. Zahner was a beloved member of the Mesa Public Schools faculty and his entire family was present to accept the award.



*Congressman Andy Biggs presents a certificate of recognition from the U.S. Congress to Army veteran David Campbell, who received the Mesa Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year Award. (Ted Wendel/MyNewsMesa.com)*

"Students sent in nominations about how he made a big impact on them," chamber officials said.

The Volunteer of the Year was awarded to U.S. Army veteran David Campbell and his service dog, Caleb.

"What an honor for me to be on stage with David and his service dog," said Congressman Andy Biggs, District 5, who presented Campbell with an American flag flown over the U.S. Capitol. "He's an inspiration. With citizens like David, America will continue to be great. He was wounded in Kuwait, and here's a man who resolved to take that challenge. I see many veterans with a host of issues and that's one of my main focuses, for us to help these veterans."

The rest of the winners are:



*Members of the family of Ryne Zahner receive the Mesa Chamber of Commerce Teacher of the Year Award, posthumously. (Ted*

- Professor of the Year: Paul Harasha, Mesa Community College. *Wendel/MyNewsMesa.com)*
- Student of the Year: Charlotte Ruth, Skyline High School.
- Small Business of the Year: Bliss Realty and Investments.
- Mid-Size Business of the Year: Concord General Contracting.
- Large Business of the Year: Superstition Springs Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram.
- 2017 Ambassador of the Year: Peggy Lawson of Market Builder, Inc.
- Non-Profit of the Year: The Mesa HoHoKams.
- Copperpoint Safety Award: RJC Contracting, Inc.

“We work together with the chamber to acknowledge the great businesses in our community,” Mesa Vice Mayor David Luna said.

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*Members of the George Bliss Realty and Investments firm receive the Small Business of the Year Award. (Ted Wendel/MyNewsMesa.com)*



*Concord General Contracting received the Mid-Sized Business of the Year at the Mesa Chamber of Commerce Annual Leadership Dinner. (Ted Wendel/MyNewsMesa.com)*