



**INFORMATION:**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Town of Carefree Selects 2016 Spirit of Carefree Award Recipient**

*Broker and Real Estate Developer, Harry Vardakis, Awarded for Dedication to Community*

CAREFREE, Ariz., (May 4, 2016) – At the May 3, 2016 Town Council meeting Mayor Les Peterson honored Harry Vardakis, real estate broker and developer, with the third annual Carefree Spirit Award. The Spirit of Carefree Award, underwritten by Sanderson Lincoln, is an annual award given to a Carefree resident who shows above-and-beyond dedication to the community and its residents.

Harry Vardakis has lived in Carefree forty-five years and over that time he has purchased eight properties in Carefree, including four buildings in the commercial district. “Harry has always been a profound believer that the Town should stay ahead of the curve, not behind it, and believes Carefree has a great future. His positive attitude and ambition to not slow down is infectious,” said Mayor Les Peterson.

He recently broke ground on a luxury office complex adjacent to the Downtown area and has long been known by his tenants to be a landlord that “listens and works with them”, especially during tough times. He has also generously reduced the lease costs on the office space for the Foothills Caring Corps so that they may continue to have a home in Carefree to serve hundreds of local seniors daily. Debra Determan, Executive Director of the Caring Corps shared, “Harry has been extremely supportive of the Caring Corps and believes in helping residents remain independent in their own homes. He reached out to help us locate a storefront site on Easy street so people who need our services can easily access us. He is such a firm believer in the Town and all the services that can be made available to residents. His caring spirit truly makes him a Town treasure.”

Originally from New Jersey, Mr. Vardakis and his wife, Marti, had visited Arizona often and purchased a parcel of land in Carefree with the intent of eventually retiring. After moving to Arizona in the 1960’s, Vardakis was busy in retail, sold the flourishing business, and soon his wife coaxed him to get into real estate. Her ambitions were escalated when he was invited to join a team of Carefree Developers which helped Harry launch a name for himself in the community. Since 1968, Vardakis has thrived as a vital businessman and owner of Palm Desert Realty of which he still leads the company located at 30 Easy Street in Carefree, along with a team of real estate professionals.

About the Award

The Spirit of Carefree award consists of a dichroic glass sculptor, handcrafted by local glass artisan, Peggy Pettigrew Stewart, who is known for her fascination with light and prismatic color in her glass art. Authorized and blessed by the Hopi Tribe and Clan, thereby protecting the spirit, the glass is a portrait of a life mask of Native Hopi, Second Mesa. He represents the past, and yet sees and helps guide the future and is the oral historian of his tribe preserving, protecting and guiding the past and future. The colors of the glass change with the light and tend to mimic the desert sunrise and sunsets seen over Black Mountain due to the native minerals of gold, copper and silver formed and melted into the glass at 1600 °F degrees.



Photo left: Artist Peggy Pettigrew Stewart, Spirit of Carefree Award Recipient Harry Vardakis and Carefree Mayor Les Peterson