

Westinghouse SURE: 28 Great Years and Prospering

The Beginnings – Westinghouse SURE had its beginnings in 1989 as one of President George H. W. Bush’s Thousand Points of Light Program. The idea of a retiree volunteer organization came from a retiree group formed in Minneapolis supported by the 3M Company. With their help and with the strong endorsement of Westinghouse executives George Dorman and John Marous, a kickoff luncheon meeting to establish a similar organization for Westinghouse retirees was held on July 19, 1989. At a second meeting, the mission statement was established: *“To identify, focus and mobilize the expertise and interests of Westinghouse Retirees for their personal fulfillment in volunteer services for the benefit of the community.”*

You Can Be SURE – In 1991, the name of the organization was changed to Westinghouse SURE (Service Uniting Retired Employees). From its earliest days, SURE actively searched for volunteer programs its members would be comfortable coordinating. An early program to provide volunteers at the VA Hospital then blossomed into a Hospital Volunteers Program serving many hospitals. As SURE grew, other projects were added, and that number has become an ever-changing fountain of good works for those in need within our communities.

In addition to promoting volunteerism, SURE recognized it could benefit the membership by providing information on topics of vital interest. This started in October 1991 with a program on health insurance, followed the next year with programs on pre-Medicare and post-Medicare insurance programs which were held at the Westinghouse Recreation Center in Forest Hills. An additional program to bring SURE members together has been “Trips and Tours”, varying from one-day local tours to multi-day out-of-town trips.

SURE's first annual meeting was held on June 1992. Soon after, the group started issuing the SURE newsletter at regular intervals. Until 1998, SURE received an annual stipend from the Westinghouse Electric Corporation to support its operations. When that ended, SURE began asking members for a small annual dues payment, and the membership overwhelmingly responded. Westinghouse, and later CBS, provided SURE with free office and meeting space up until 2012. SURE's continuing success has been

enhanced by the outstanding contributions of many ex-Westinghouse retirees. In the box are listed SURE's Presidents. These are the people have helped to expand SURE and increase its scope, but a lot of credit must also go to those who have accepted the responsibility of other offices, served on the Board of Directors, served as a Project Coordinator and member of the Advisory Council, or who have contributed their volunteer time to one or more of the volunteer projects.

SURE’s Past Chairmen/Presidents

1989-1992	Bob Lawrence
1992-1995	Bob Crouse
1995-1997	Tom Dunn
1997-2000	Maury Fey
2000-2003	Parvin Lippincott
2003-2006	Maury Fey
2006-2009	Howard Finney
2009-2010	John Senko
2010-2016	Maury Fey
2016	Ed Kilpela
2016 – 2017	Lucio Facchini

Recognition

In 1996, SURE instituted awards and recognition of our outstanding volunteers. The first series of awards were the Spotlight Awards. These awards recognize outstanding volunteers and help to publicize the projects that they work on. A second series of annual awards was instituted to recognize outstanding volunteer service to be presented at the SURE annual meeting. These awards include the Charlie Ruch Lifetime Achievement Award, the Bob Lawrence Special Service Award, the Maury Fey President's Award, the Couple of the Year Award, and the Recruiter of the Year Award. The Charlie Ruch Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes service to SURE or volunteering over a long period of time. This award was initiated in 1999 and awarded posthumously to Charlie Ruch, the long time and much beloved Westinghouse Historian. Award recipients of this award are listed (right).

The Bob Lawrence Special Service Award, named for SURE's founding President, and the Maury Fey President's Award, named for a longtime SURE president, are intended to recognize outstanding service to the SURE organization. The Couple of the Year Award recognizes couples who work together to volunteer. The Recruiter of the Year Award recognizes project coordinators or others who put forth effort to recruit new volunteers or to recruit new SURE members. At the annual meeting recognition is also given to SURE members who have more than 500 volunteer hours during the past calendar year.

SURE members have also received awards from the organizations they help and some have been recognized by the local community. Twelve of our members have received the Jefferson Award (see below). The SURE Organization was also recognized in 2002 as a finalist for the state-wide Silver and Gold Award. SURE was honored for "Innovation in Serving Pennsylvanians."

Jefferson Award Winners – The Jefferson Award is the nation's highest award for Volunteering. It honors the achievements and contributions of everyday people who are inspired to help their less fortunate neighbors either directly or by working in volunteer organizations dedicated to various facets of community service. Since 1972, this national award has been honoring those Americans who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer services. And every year, 25 individuals from Western Pennsylvania are selected in each category to be the recipient of this coveted Award. Since 1999, twelve (12) Westinghouse SURE members have been selected by the American Institute for Public Service to receive this coveted award. The SURE members who have received this honor have spent countless hours over many years serving others during their retirement years, and have received their Jefferson Awards for

Charlie Ruch Lifetime Achievement Award Winners

- 1999 – Charlie Ruch
- 2000 – Bob Lawrence
- 2001 – Maury Fey
- 2002 – Bob Crouse
- 2003 – Bernie Riechers
- 2004 – Agnes Sink
- 2005 – Ted Yearsley
- 2006 – John Komar
- 2007 – Harry McCracken
- 2008 – John Skoogland
- 2009 – Renny Clark
- 2010 – Ed Reis
- 2011 – John Senko
- 2012 – Bob Plummer
- 2013 – Bob Miller
- 2014 – Frank Kravetz
- 2015 – Stu Simpson
- 2016 – William Campbell

decades of volunteer activity. Awardees are honored at an elegant reception and are presented bronze Jefferson Award medallions recognizing their remarkable volunteer service to those less fortunate within their communities. The following list includes the names and a brief summary of the volunteer work of the twelve (12) SURE members who have achieved this distinction. Their tremendous accomplishments and this national recognition sets SURE apart from similar volunteer organizations in western Pennsylvania, and perhaps the nation as a whole.

Westinghouse SURE’s Jefferson Award Winners and their outstanding activities are as follows:

Mary Bach	1999	Statewide Consumer Advocacy
Fred Kraft	2004	Court Appointed Special Advocate for afflicted children
George Muhlberg	2006	Service Corps of Retired Executives
John Komar	2007	Lifelong Service to the Boy Scouts of America
John Senko	2007	Computer Education for Seniors in Latrobe
John Mellor	2009	Service to numerous Plum Service Organizations
Fritz Ottenheimer	2011	PACE School for Troubled Children in Churchill
Agnes Sink	2012	Organization of SURE’s multitude of Hospital Volunteers
Harry McCracken	2013	Lifelong Fire and Rescue Service in Westmoreland County
Maury Fey	2013	Long term Westinghouse SURE Leadership
Frank Kravitz	2013	American Ex-Prisoners of War Advocacy
Stuart Simpson	2016	Service to Homeless Veterans and Ministry in Prisons

The SURE Newsletter – The initial SURE Planning Committee recognized the need for regular communications to promote volunteerism and to publicize other information of interest to Westinghouse retirees. At that time, Westinghouse published “Passages” with the main content being a listing of retiree death notices. While never officially stated, our current newsletter was originally a local replacement for “Passages.” Issue #1 of the SURE newsletter began at the end of 1991.

Over the years, the size of the newsletter has gradually expanded. In addition to accenting volunteerism with articles about SURE's projects and recognition of volunteers in the various SURE programs, a number of other regular features have been added. These include information on SURE events (including Roundtable programs and Trips and Tours), and listings of retiree deaths. In addition, regular educational topics are also included: Health care topics by Annette Karnash, financial and tax topics by Bob Miller, and "The Consumer Corner" by Mary Bach, AARP consumer advocate. Another important communication medium is the Westinghouse SURE website: www.WestinghouseSURE.org. On this site, visitors can peruse past and present newsletters as well as membership applications, information about trips and tours, and links to other websites of interest to Westinghouse retirees. In

SURE Newsletter Editors
1990 to 1992 – Tony Furfari
1992 to 1999 – Bill Singley assisted by Ollie Rieley
1999 to 2004 – Karen Hanks
2004 to 2005 – Bill Singley and Ollie Rieley
2005 to 2014 – John Skooglund assisted by Bob Plummer
2014 to 2015 – Alan Kuenzel assisted by Nancy Liotta McGough
2016 – Allan Kuenzel

addition to posting the newsletters on the website, most SURE members now receive the newsletters electronically. This enables the newsletter to contain color pictures and include additional material that does not fit print-size limitations. Westinghouse SURE also introduced its entrée into Social Media in November of 2014 with the establishment/creation of its Facebook page: www.WestinghouseSURE/Facebook.com. Visitors to SURE on Facebook find photos of volunteer activity, links to articles, and event notifications. Vintage photos and information updates are also regularly posted. In the 2½ years since we launched the SURE Facebook page, member interaction and participation has seen steady growth.

The Financial Roundtable – The first monthly meeting of the Roundtable was organized by Bob Lawrence and Maury Fey with the vision that members would be interested in on financial planning topics, such as managing investments, retirement planning, and estate planning. The meeting was held in October 1995 at the Westinghouse Recreation Center. The first five Roundtables all featured one or two presentations by SURE members. Beginning with the May 1996 meeting, experts from financial firms including Fidelity Investments, Federated Investors, Smith-Barney, Merrill Lynch, and others, began to make presentations. The location for the Roundtable soon moved to the Science and Technology Center. Initially the Roundtable averaged around 30 attendees, but by the end of 1996 this had doubled. Currently the Roundtable has over 300 members and continues to meet on a monthly basis. Attendance is typically about 100 members. Jim Ciesar and Larry Shockling are the current coordinators and for the past several years, the Roundtable has been held at the Comfort Inn in Penn Hills.

WEICO Oldtimers Integration – One of the significant 2016 accomplishments was the Integration of the WEICO Oldtimers group into SURE. For those not familiar with the Westinghouse Electric International Company (WEICO): it was created in NYC back in the 1920's after George Westinghouse visited England and decided Westinghouse should get more involved in the International marketplace. At that time he decided to create WEICO to handle all of the Westinghouse International business. For the next several decades, WEICO's cadre of experienced international personnel admirably carried out their tasks. Around 1980 the W Board decided to make each Division of the Corporation – worldwide – responsible for the sale of their respective products and services.

WEICO personnel were then scattered around the world to take on new assignments: some went overseas, some came to Pittsburgh and many went to their corresponding Divisions. One of those coming to Pittsburgh was Jim Sheridan. Before long, the former WEICO personnel realized that they were losing contact with many of their associates and friends. Jim, along with Bob Hughes, decided that we needed to keep us all in touch. They decided we should get together for annual reunions and that Jim would produce a monthly newsletter. The first reunion was a Saturday afternoon barbeque in Bob Hughes backyard in Fox Chapel and it was also the moment the WEICO Oldtimers group officially formed. We had reunions up until just a few years ago. Jim Sheridan published the Newsletters for many years and that effort was then taken over by Ken Ketchum and Bob Hughes. In 2000, Dick Kimball replaced Ken Ketchum, assisting Bob with the Newsletter. By 2006 Bob stepped down, and Dick took over publication of the "WEICO Oldtimers" newsletter. With membership dwindling and a lack of Int'l news input, Dick was ready to discontinue the Newsletter In 2016. But thanks to productive discussions with Rich Ekstrom and Maury Fey, the decision was made that Dick and the Oldtimers would join forces with SURE. Dick is now a regular International News contributor to the SURE Newsletter, and to date, many WEICO Oldtimer members have become SURE members.