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## Human Rights Commission to hold Feb. 12 Community Service Awards

**Feb. 5, 2024**

The City of Palm Springs Human Rights Commission will present community service awards to seven individuals and two organizations next week to acknowledge their outstanding contributions when it comes to promoting and protecting human rights, social progress, better standards of living, and equality for all individuals.

The “**Promoting Universal Human Rights Close to Home**” ceremony will take place on **Monday, Feb. 12 at 5:30 pm** in the Council Chamber at City Hall, 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way. The public is invited to attend.

This year’s honorees have improved the quality of life for Greater Palm Springs and Coachella Valley residents over the course of many years as well as helped the unsheltered, senior citizens, LGBTQ+ youth and families, active-duty military and veterans, people living with HIV, communities of color, artists and performers, and many others.

The recipients of this year’s 2023-2024 Community Service Awards are:

- **Brad Prescott.** In the summer of 2022, Prescott gifted what is now a preserve for open space in Palm Springs that will be cherished for generations. His belief that everyone has a fundamental right to full access of parks and natural resources is what prompted his gift that will allow generations of Palm Springs residents and visitors to enjoy the open space in the heart of the city. Access to nature is a health and human rights issues. Research has long supported the connection between health and time spent outside. Communities that lack access to nature are not just missing out on a pleasant amenity, but are also being excluded from the human right of health and well-being. Through his generous gift, Prescott has transformed Palm Springs for the benefit of everyone.
- **Dee Dee Wilson Barton.** Inclusivity and human rights are the core values of the accounting firm Barton and her husband have operated in Palm Springs since 2007. In fact, it was Barton’s desire to bring her expertise in registered domestic partnerships to the LGBTQ community that was the impetus for the start of her firm. Since then, Barton has had a positive human rights impact in the community through her philanthropic work with the LGBTQ community, women, children, and education. Her efforts have ensured medical assistance for low-income individuals, improved the lives of residents experiencing homelessness, and helped to eradicate food insecurity. As the former Chair of the Palm Springs Human Rights Commission and a former Board member of the Foundation for Palm Springs Unified School District, Barton remains committed to having a





positive impact and serving as a role model for youth in our community. In addition, Barton's commitment to the LGBTQ community has included being the top sponsor of the Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast.

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- **Coachella Valley Filipino Festival Committee.** This new and inclusive festival, open to everyone, took place at the Palm Springs Cultural Center on October 8, 2023 and was attended by thousands of residents and visitors from throughout Southern California. In addition to featuring dozens of vendors, art and historical exhibits, live music and dance performances, the festival also offered countless opportunities to celebrate cultural pride and highlight Filipino contributions in our region. The vision for the festival not only celebrated the rich cultural heritage of the Filipino community, but also promoted cross-cultural understanding, tolerance, and appreciation. Actively engaging with local schools, community organizations, and businesses to create partnerships that extended to the impact of the event throughout the year, the festival committee's commitment to education and community outreach has made an incredible mark on our diverse community.
- **LGBTQ+ History & Archives of the Desert.** This community-based archive documents, collects, preserves, and makes accessible the history of LGBTQ+ individuals, businesses, organizations, and events centered in Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley. Their vision is to focus on the documenting and preservation of the history of the LGBTQ+ community in Greater Palm Springs, and share that history with LGBTQ+ individuals, organizations, allies, and the public. One recent example of their work is the highly successful temporary exhibit, held from Oct 12- November 14, 2023, entitled "Out on the Walk," a collaboration with the Palm Springs Walk of Stars and the City of Palm Springs, which identified and recognized over 60 LGBTQ honorees among more than 450 stars honoring notable entertainers, humanitarians, civic leaders, architects, artists, authors, athletes, and veterans who have been included on the sidewalks throughout downtown and uptown Palm Springs.
- **Rabbi Dr. Jules Long.** Long is the founder, spiritual leader, and teacher of the faith-based outreach organization, Desert Outreach Synagogue. Under his leadership, this synagogue shares the community's joys and sorrows, offering uplifting and enlightening sermons to encourage and inspire. Through his work, the community has had the opportunity to make informed choices regarding Jewish beliefs and practices and has been instrumental in comforting the community in solidarity with Ukraine and most recently through the tragic October 7 terrorist assault on the people of Israel. Freedom of religion or belief is guaranteed by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Rabbi Dr. Jules Long holds various degrees and has spent many years working in small to large organizations and Fortune 500 companies, serving in both healthcare and mortuary science. He is an accomplished musician, pianist, organist, and vocalist. He also brings devotion, dedication, and passion to his rabbinate and a desire to enhance and improve the lives of those he interacts with and to improve the world. His congregation prides itself on inclusivity, diversity, and being a





place to call home for interfaith couples, and families, unaffiliated, secular, and anyone looking to engage or renew their connection to Judaism.

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- **Tom Oliver and Matthew Stocker.** Oliver and Stocker have become well known in Palm Springs as a couple who volunteers their time to help improve the lives of others. The couple, who relocated from San Francisco in 2015, have volunteered together since they met in 2008. Since their arrival in Palm Springs, they have actively volunteered and raised funds for DAP Health, the LGBTQ Center of the Desert, The L-Fund, AIDS Assistance Program, Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, Palm Springs Pride, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Human Rights Campaign, The Emerald Kingdom, ONE-PS, Halloween on Arenas, and Modernism Week. Oliver and Stocker are the past recipients of the prestigious University of California, Riverside, Chancellor's Award – "People Helping People" for their service to the community. In addition, they received the Everyday Hero's Award from DAP Health honoring "ordinary people who make a difference in the community." The couple volunteer their time, money, and skills to help make the world a better place and to help as many people as possible.
- **Tommi Rose.** When he was just 18-years-old, Rose marched in Miami against Anita Bryant's campaign to ban gay teachers from schools. Two years later, he moved to San Francisco, where he participated in the White Night Riots and marched in solidarity after the assassination of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk. While in San Francisco, he became a member of the Imperial Court of San Francisco and started raising funds for various charities; producing, directing, hosting, and performing in more fundraisers than anyone can remember. Since relocating to Palm Springs in 2002, Rose's volunteerism has focused on LGBTQ youth advocacy and counseling, volunteering with the United Services Organization (USO) and Soldiers Organized Services (SOS), which provide rides to servicemen and women between Palm Springs and Twentynine Palms. He has also delivered for Meals on Wheels and performed in local nursing homes and hospices entertaining seniors with mobility issues.
- **Willie Rhine.** Rhine, an owner of the popular eateries Eight4Nine Restaurant & Lounge in the Uptown Design District and Willie's Modern Fare in Rancho Mirage, is a 30-year resident of Palm Springs. He has long been socially responsible and involved in many aspects of the community, including owning and operating a 100-seat theater that specialized in Broadway show tunes and gay-themed plays in the mid-1990s. Two of Rhine's favorite words are "Be Nice." He discovered the joy of being nice and giving back when he started volunteering his time and donated his construction skills at the Special Care Unit at Desert Regional Medical Center, working with HIV patients. In addition, he received an Everyday Hero Award from DAP Health, and along with his business partner has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for charities such as the Palm Springs Art Museum, The Center, Loving All Animals, Sanctuary Palm Springs, AIDS Assistance Program, DAP Health, Michael's House, ABC Recovery Center, the Braille Institute, and many more. In particular, one of Rhine's annual highlights is the Greater Palm Springs Pride Brunch at which thousands of dollars have been raised over the years to support the organization. Rhine and



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his spouse are members of DAP Health's Partners for Life, the AIDS Assistance Program's Jeannette Rockefeller Angel Program, as well as members of The Center's Ocotillo Club.

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The Palm Springs Human Rights Commission is a nine-member commission of volunteer citizens appointed by the City Council for three-year terms. It meets at 5:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month. Meetings are open to the public and anyone with a human rights issue or question is invited to participate and speak in the public comment period that begins each meeting.

