

Randy Holbrook named Rotary Club's Person of the Year

Hannah Camille Bealer 8:11 p.m. EDT April 14, 2014



(Photo: Jonathon Bird/News-Messenger)

FREMONT – When Donald Ballah had the opportunity to nominate someone for the Rotary Club's Person of the Year Award, he said he immediately knew it had to be Randy Holbrook.

"He's one of the most courageous individuals I know," said Ballah, North Central EMS' vice president and chief operating officer.

At the age of 53, Holbrook, a North Central EMT-I, never missed a day of work during his ongoing battle with stomach cancer.

Throughout his chemotherapy and radiation treatments, his colleagues say he remained dedicated to his work — just as he has for the past 24 years.

"We never heard him complain. He never whined. He's just a great guy," Ballah said.

Holbrook's positive attitude throughout the process influenced many of his co-workers.

As of November, Holbrook has battled cancer four times.

"His determination inspired us to never give up," said Ballah during a tearful speech.

As a gift, the Rotary Club presented Holbrook with a plaque and a wooden clock with the engraved words "Person of the Year 2013."

"Thank you so much for this award," said Holbrook, who said he was not aware of the nomination until a couple weeks ago. "I'm speechless."

There were five runner-ups for the award, including Charles Gonya and Dr. Charles Hull, who have been donating game feed proceeds to Fremont Ross High School and Saint Joseph Central Catholic High School's athletics; retired Woodville fire chief of 22 years Paul Heineman; Sgt. Angel Burgos; and Cindy Welty, magistrate of Sandusky County, who saved the life of her nominator, Robert Goedicke, after he suffered an aortic aneurysm in her office.

This marks the second year the Rotary Club has named a Person of the Year.

"They do deeds that are positive and deeds that have a profound effect on our community," said Dennis Newman, one of the chairmen for the Person of the Year Award. "They're not for someone who is an executive or on a board, but (for those who) have done extraordinary things."

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