

# Top employee in Hills brings purpose to work

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Bill Benton didn't stay up nights wondering whether he'd be the 1988 Employee of the Year at Farmington Hills City Hall.

That's just not something he thought he would be in the running for.

"I was a bit surprised," said the 16-year finance department veteran. "I'm usually the one who prepares the information for other people for the awards, the checks and such."

An accountant, Benton handles the payroll, special assessment billing, trust funds for projects, pension plan, actuarial reports and government grants.

"He's a very trustworthy employee. One of the key elements of his duties is that he deals a lot with payroll information and deductions. He keeps it all confidential. Bill handles that with a great deal of confidence and concern for people's rights," finance director John Rock said.

But the University of Detroit

graduate isn't all numbers. One of his greatest concerns and interests is people and helping them. In fact, his interaction with colleagues at city hall is one of his characteristics that prompted his nomination for the city's biggest annual award.

WHEN PRESENTING the award Jan. 9 at the 13th annual recognition awards night, city manager William Costick said Benton is "known as quite a gentleman around city hall." He's known as "witty, generous and sensitive." His nominators added that Benton "brings a cheerful attitude and sense of mission to city hall."

In addition to having his name placed on the Employee of the Year plaque in the city hall lobby with past winners, Benton will receive a \$500 check. Past winners are Elsie McKewen of the assessing division and Loretta Conway of the special services department senior adult division.

A former marathon runner, who now runs for fitness, Benton ran the



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Bill Benton, a 16-year Farmington Hills finance department veteran, was named "Employee of the Year" for 1988. His nominators said Benton "brings a cheerful attitude and sense of mission to city hall."

Boston Marathon nine times, placing 200th once out of a large, select field of runners. Admitting that winning the award was "awkward" for him, Benton said this award is different.

"When you race, you train for a goal. Something like this, there's so many employees that could win this. Loretta and Elsie were not surprises to me."

HIS INVOLVEMENT and commitment to people extends beyond city hall. He's a backup for the Meals on Wheels program, using his own lunch hour to take meals to senior adults when he's needed. Benton also makes household repairs for senior adults. His handiwork, learned while watching his father, extends to the renovation of his own West Bloomfield house.

He's also involved in the annual Rouge River cleanup and is one of the cooks for the annual employee picnic.

"In general, there's an increase in volunteerism. I enjoy helping people. For me, it's putting a more religious, spiritual focus on my life. You should do what you believe in. If you don't put it into action, it's incomplete," Benton said.

# 5 others honored at Hills ceremony

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills finance department veteran William Benton was the only city employee recognized in the 13th annual recognition awards night Jan. 9.

Five employees were honored with the outstanding employee recognition awards and a \$200 check each. They are Jerry W. Brock, public works; Leonard Chapman, building division; Daria Crowe, building maintenance; Jeanette Hayward, police department; and Shirley Shroff, public services.

Public safety officers of the year awards were presented to a 26-year police department veteran, Capt. Russell Conway, and to firefighter Ron Schwartz of the fire department.

Employees also were honored for their years of service to the city. Honored for 25 years of service was Lt. Jack Brown, police department.

Those honored for 20 years of service were: John Hedrick, Norman Kilmer, Ernest Miller and James Worthington, police department; and Robert Rebloj, fire department.

Honored for 15 years of service: Douglas Anderson and Dennis Green, police department; Barbara Baunforth, city manager's office; David Ewart and Thomas Yakes, fire department; Doris Fleming, city clerk's office; and Martha Gleichman, finance department.

Honored for 10 years of service: Gary Brandemuhl, Patrick Browne, Robert Burkhardt, Shirley K. Gates, Gary Hawald, Sandra Rochford, Daryl Slowinski, police department; James Schierloh, Iris Morgan, fire department; Mary Jane Ale, city clerk's office; Jon Maddern, special services; Dorothy Savage, general government.

Honored for five years of service: Ronald D. Achtenberg, James P. Cheyne, Walter Kurzeja, Keith L. Lampear, Howard J. Saltz, Ronald Segall, fire department; Marilyn Janet Ogrodowski, Donna Reid, police department; Robert Ballard, building; Debra Howe, finance; Marguerite Jordan, city clerk's office; D. Glenn Lemmon, assistant; Nancy Plowar, Shari Suleman, finance.

# For pool owners, safety is not 3-month concern

Safety is more than merely a three-month summer concern for Michigan swimming pool owners because dangerous accidents can occur year round, AAA Michigan reports.

"Pool owners should make certain that their pools are properly secured for winter," said Dick Robertson, AAA Michigan homeowner's claim manager.

Both in-ground and above-ground pools should have safety covers which secure the pool entirely so children and animals cannot fall in and freeze or drown during winter.

"If you don't have a commercial safety cover, at least put something over the pool, secure it and be sure to remove any water that may col-

lect there," said Robertson. "Children sometimes drown by falling into water on top of the covers."

Also, he cautioned, covers that a child can crawl under, such as a solar cover, are dangerous and should never be used to enclose a pool for winter, a solar cover is usually used to retain the pool's heat in the summer. Because it floats on top of the pool and is not securely attached to the sides of the pool, it should never be used in the winter.

Above-ground pool filters should be taken apart in the winter as playing children can use the filter as a ladder to climb into the pool.

Further, be sure security fences, barriers and self-latching gates work properly at all times.

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