

# ATHENA winner thanks colleagues, family

BY JONI HUBBED  
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Tears and praise flowed freely during Wednesday's Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce ATHENA Awards Luncheon, held at Executive Hotel and Suites by Best Western in Farmington Hills.

The event honored Terry Deichert, winner of the 2002

ATHENA Award. Created in 1982, the Lansing-based ATHENA Foundation has expanded its program to all 50 states, honoring women who excel in the business world and serve as positive role models for women. Deichert was selected from a field of four nominees.

"Terry's enthusiasm, energy and most of all, her heart of gold, have a positive effect on every-

**■ 'Terry's enthusiasm, energy and most of all, her heart of gold have a positive effect on everyone around her.'**

**Bernice Brandon**  
—2001 winner

one around her," said 2001 honoree Bernice Brandon, who presented the award. "She has truly earned the respect of her colleagues and friends."

Over the past year, Deichert sacrificed time with the roofing business she co-owns with her husband, Tom, time with her children and grandchildren, even thousands of her own hard-earned dollars to keep open the historic Longacre House in Farmington Hills. Still a volunteer board member, she has stepped down from her post as volunteer director for the community center.

A gala fund-raiser held last month ended her long and difficult crusade.

"Mistakes are the dues one pays for living a fulfilled life," Deichert said, reciting a favorite quote. "I have definitely lived a fulfilled life this past year."

However, she felt her time and energy were a great investment. "I have gained much more than I have given."

In her emotional acceptance

speech, Deichert thanked Longacre House staff and volunteers, as well as trainers with Dale Carnegie and the Empowerment Center, which have both been part of her personal growth over the past year.

Tearfully, Deichert spoke of the sacrifices her family made and thanked them "for supporting one of their own as she pursued her dream." She saved her most emotional words for Tom, who believed in her when she was uncertain and wholeheartedly supported her efforts.

"I am truly what I am because you loved me," Deichert said.

In addition to the traditional ATHENA sculpture, she received proclamations from the City of Farmington Hills, the City of Congressmen Joseph Knollenberg.

In its 10th year, the awards ceremony has always been sponsored by Bob Saks Oldsmobile.

Owner Bob Mechigan said his involvement originally started with Oldsmobile's sponsorship, and he continued to support ATHENA because he believes in it.

"It's a great community program," he said.

In addition to Brandon, past recipients include Lynda Mlynarek, Beverly Pappi, Deborah Grant, Sandra Hermanoff, Linda Jolicœur, Nurten Ural, Sharon Hain-Gaber and Laura Rembicz-Cattermole.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BIZELER

Because he loves her: Terry Deichert and husband Thomas pose for photos after the ceremony.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BIZELER

Honored: Bob Mechigan presents the Athena Award to Terry Deichert.

## Florine's advice: Eat vegetables and fruits daily

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If you only do one thing every day for the rest of your life, eat five to seven servings of vegetables and fruits.

"They have the antioxidants that are so vital to good health," said Florine Mark, one of Michigan's most renowned weight loss experts and keynote speaker at the Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce's ATHENA Awards Luncheon.

Held Wednesday at Executive Hotel and Suites by Best Western in Farmington Hills, the event honored Terry Deichert, winner of the 2002 ATHENA Award. A former honoree, Mark is Pres-

ident and CEO of the WW Group, based in Farmington Hills.

And even though she started speaking while servers were delivering a cheese-cake dessert, her message centered around a startling truth about a condition most people don't think of as anything more than a behavior problem.

"Thirty-five thousand people died last year of obesity," Mark said, noting Michigan's population ranks among the most over-weight in the country.

For nearly 30 years, she has kept off a weight loss of 50 pounds. Admitting she tried every fad diet available and even took diet pills, Mark said the most important thing that happened to her when it came to weight loss happened

"from the neck up."

After the affects of diet pills landed her in the hospital, she turned to Weight Watchers. It meant leaving her husband and five children behind and spending five days in New York, going to meetings and measuring everything she ate.

"I got on the scale on Friday, and I was sure I'd gained weight," she said, because of the amount of food she'd been eating. "In five days, I lost five and a half pounds."

Weight Watchers founder Jean Knight asked Mark to take the company back to Michigan, by purchasing a franchise. Mark needed \$5,000; she had \$500. After being turned down by a

bank, she convinced Knight to trust her for the rest.

Now her WW Group is Weight Watchers International's largest franchise. A large part of her success, she believes, has been positive self-talk, which she started after hyperventilating at the prospect of holding her first meeting.

Mark looked at herself in the mirror and said, "Florine, you can do anything you want, if you want it bad enough."

On Wednesday, she told her audience she still does that positive self-talk every morning, now joined by her husband, Plymouth physician Dr. Bill Ross. Mark pointed out people usually have no trouble with negative self-talk, noticing bad days before they even get

out of bed in the morning.

"Your brain is the only thing that tells you what to do," she stressed.

Mark also pooh-poohed diets that promise weight loss by eating certain foods in certain combinations. "A calorie is a calorie is a calorie," she said. "You can lose weight by eating 500 calories of chocolate every day, guaranteed. But you won't have any nails and your hair will fall out."

Her secret for success, she said, involves eating well, exercise, giving back to the community and laughing every day.

"This body is a gift. It's given to you for a period of time and that's it. You have to take care of it."

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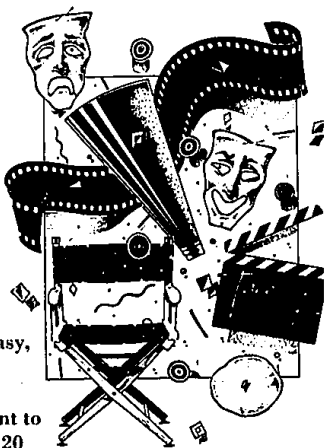
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