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TOWN OF CAREFREE NAMES 2017 SPIRIT OF CAREFREE AWARD RECIPIENT

"Carefree Santa" Ron Bacher to be Posthumously Honored

CAREFREE, Ariz. – Known throughout the Desert Foothills area as "Carefree Santa", Ron Bacher has been chosen as the 2017 recipient of the Spirit of Carefree Award, underwritten by Sanderson Lincoln. This annual distinction honors Carefree residents who demonstrate above-and-beyond dedication to the community and its residents. The award will be presented during the Town's Community Block Party event on Saturday, April 6 at 3 p.m., and will be accepted by Mr. Bacher's widow, Annette Bacher.

"Ron actually WAS Santa to those of us who knew him and loved him," noted Carefree Mayor Les Peterson. "Many area children who grew up with Ron being the 'Carefree Santa' for a decade miss his twinkling eyes, his hearty laugh and his always positive personality. His spirit of cooperation and his willingness to share his many talents capture the essence of the Carefree spirit, that of giving back unselfishly to the community. He is a most deserving recipient of the award."

Ron Bacher relocated to Phoenix from his native Chicago in 1972, and was an accomplished jewelry artist and woodworker. He was perhaps best known throughout the area for his distinctive long, white beard, and each Christmas season he became Santa Claus for the Town's annual holiday celebrations. His woodworking artistry can still be viewed in the Carefree Desert Gardens, as he was the creator of the post for the Little Free Library located on the west side of the gardens. Mr. Bacher passed away suddenly of a heart attack on March 26, 2018.

The Spirit of Carefree Award, established in 2013, is presented on an annual basis in recognition of those individuals that demonstrate dedication and service to the Foothills community, and Carefree in particular. Previous recipients include former Town councilman Arthur Gimson, former Carefree Mayor David Schwan, and local business owners Harry Vardakis and Steve Woods.

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About the Spirit of Carefree Award Artist

The Spirit of Carefree award is a dichroic glass sculpture handcrafted by local Carefree glass artisan Peggy Pettigrew Stewart, owner of Desert Glasshopper Studios. She is internationally known for her

intricate blending of light and prismatic color in her glass art, and many of her award-winning pieces have been featured in museums, exhibitions and galleries worldwide.

About the Town of Carefree

Carefree is a scenic community of over 3,500 residents nestled in the Sonoran Desert Foothills. Incorporated in 1984, the town is regarded as one of the most inspiring and livable places in Arizona and centers its culture on desert lifestyle, architecture, culinary arts, health, wellness and community involvement. For more information, VisitCarefree.com or call 480-488-3686.