

If you read Joe Laufer's resume carefully you will actually find the word "retirement." But Joe's volume of ongoing work activities, coupled with his vast list of past and present community service, overshadows even the notion that he ever retired from anything.

For the record, Joe did, in fact, retire in 1997 as an Associate Dean at Burlington County College after a 36-year career in education (27 of them at BCC). Ten years later he is -- like the Energizer bunny -- still going strong.

For starters, he was appointed Burlington County Historian (a Volunteer position) by the Burlington County Freeholders in 2003; he created and maintains the Southampton Township website; he assisted the local Relief Fire Company in its quest for preservation grant funding; he served as a member of the Jack Allen Early Country Living Museum; he became a member of the Roebling Main Gate Museum; and, he continues to serve as President of the H.B. Smith Industrial Village Conservancy.

He's been a volunteer for his church (Holy Eucharist Parish in Tabernacle); is a past president of the Southampton Historical Society and Library Board; has been a board member of the Burlington County Historical Society, the Rancocas Valley Tourism Association, Samaritan Hospice, Githens Center and PAWS Farm Nature Center; and, has served as a liaison to such organizations as the United Way and various business associations.

As if all of this weren't enough, Joe also works as a travel consultant and tour leader, is the Director of Alumni Relations for the Lenape Regional High School District, serves as an elected Southampton Committeeman, and is a part-time staff member with the Burlington County Division of Cultural Affairs & Tourism.

All that considered, the Volunteer Center of Burlington County is extremely pleased to make Joseph M. Laufer the 9th recipient of the Lloyd Ritter Community Service Award. He has managed to find his niche in the volunteer community, and, in the process, enjoy his retirement while serving as a role model for would-be volunteers of all ages.

Moreover, as colleagues, supporters, family and friends will attest, Joe has never been a figurehead for any organization with which he has been affiliated. He is aggressively hands-on, well organized, and perpetually upbeat and positive, even when the best laid plans (and fundraisers) go awry.

For example, on the third Saturday of July you can find him, in his role as President of the Smithville Conservancy, near the start/finish line for the Mount Holly Smithville Grand Prix bicycle race. Typically, he starts the day selling T-shirts and ends it wiping sweat off his brow while posing for a trophy presentation photo with the winner -- before embarking on clean-up chores.

In accepting the Volunteer Center's honor, Joe is joining a distinguished list of past honorees, including Dr. Robert Messina, President of Burlington County College; Mary Wells, Director of Family services of Burlington County; Millie Gama, former Executive

Director of the Burlington County Chamber of Commerce; Burlington County Freeholder Vincent R. Farias; former Burlington County Superintendent of Schools Walter Keiss; Dick and Doris Alaimo of Mount Holly; Robert Santare, President of Champion Fasteners; and former Burlington County Clerk Edward A. Kelly, Jr.

Joe is accepting the Community Service Award in the company of long-time friends and colleagues, not to mention devoted family members, including his wife, Penny; sons Kurt, Kevin (and wife Tracy), Kristopher (and fiancé Sara Reiss); daughter Kerry (and husband David); and grandkids Luna Rae, Michael & Mary Grace -- the next generation of Laufer volunteers!