



Parker Center OS 32 | 601 Pemberton Browns Mills Rd. | Pemberton, NJ 08068

Renee L. Borstad

Prying into Renee Borstad's record of community service has been no easy task. The problem, you see, is that she's been involved with so many charitable organizations over the years, that even she can't remember them all.

This much is clear. For 30 years Renee Borstad (the "Hat Lady") has made her mark as Burlington County's feisty Consumer Affairs Director. Along the way, she has become a favorite of many civic organizations and citizens' groups, providing them and their members some sound, and often colorful advice on avoiding fraud, and making wise choices in the marketplace.

According to one of her closest friends and unofficial "biographers," you could fill several scrapbooks on the life and times of Renee Borstad, and you might still overlook an important accomplishment.

In any event, it is with extreme pride that the Volunteer Center of Burlington County has chosen Renee Borstad as the 10th recipient of its Lloyd Ritter Community Service Award. Based on the response of those who know Renee, we know we have chosen well.

For starters, Renee has served on the board of the Burlington County Council of the Boy Scouts of America for more than 25 years, and was the first woman to serve as council president in 1999 and 2000. She serves on the council's Jewish Community Relations Council.

Our research has also turned up past and present memberships in the American Cancer Society, Beverly Rotary, the Jewish War Veterans, American Veterans of Foreign Wars, not to mention the National Association of Consumer Affairs, just to name a few. She is a former vice president for planning with the United Way of Burlington County. She has been a fundraiser for the Burlington County Chapter of Muscular Dystrophy.

A graduate of Burlington County College, she also has served on the college's Paralegal Advisory Committee and Alumni Association and, as fate would have it, in 1980 she was the first inductee into BCC's Alumni Hall of Fame. Renee graduated from Thomas Edison College of New Jersey in 1981 with a BS in paralegal technology.

She served on the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Burlington County Bar Association and the Municipal Court Task Force, and, through her involvement with the statewide association for consumer affairs directors, has been its legislative

liaison. She's also a member of the National Association of Consumer Affairs Administrators (NACAA).

Renee's personal past history is no less intriguing. She was born in Harlem, New York City, grew up in the Bronx, served a stint in the U.S. Air Force, and moved from Okinawa to Willingboro in 1961 with her husband (the late Orville Borstad), where they raised their daughter Rochelle, and sons Clyde and Wayne. (She's also a proud mom-mom to grandkids Justin, Alycia, Megan, Martin, Rosalie and Jarod.)

She worked as a paralegal for attorney Bennett Bozarth before applying for the Consumer Affairs position at the County, and the rest, as they say, is history. Her one-time staff of four (which includes the Division of Weights and Measures) is now 17, and has literally saved Burlington County consumers millions of dollars. (She is the only woman ever to hold the title of Superintendent of Weights and Measures).

Her reputation as a consumer advocate virtually speaks for itself. She investigates complaints, mediates disputes between consumers and businesses, and engages the County Prosecutor to go after the worst of the offenders – such as home improvement contractors who take the money but don't deliver the work.

While much of her work is focused on educating and protecting seniors – considered the most vulnerable to unscrupulous wheeler-dealers – she has encouraged high schools to participate in the state-sponsored Consumer Bowl. Since 2000, when the program began, Burlington County consistently has led in the number of schools that compete.

Renee has received numerous awards and special recognitions for her good deeds over the years, ranging from her award as one of Burlington County's Outstanding Women in 2000 to the Prosecutor's PROCOPS Special Recognition Award in 2007.

In accepting the Volunteer Center's honor, Renee joins 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; former Burlington County Clerk Edward A. Kelly, Jr.; and Joseph Lauffer, former Associate Dean at Burlington County College and current County Historian.

All in all, Renee has done the community well over the years – or, as she would say – “not bad for an old lady!”