

# Arizona Daily Star®

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## 3 surprised with annual Tucson chamber of commerce awards

By Dan Sullivan

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

A local lawyer prominent in economic development, a philanthropic economist and a longtime local developer were given top honors Monday by the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce.

A roving band of officials from the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce surprised the three honorees, naming this year's Man and Woman of the Year and Founders Award winner with sweepstakes-style fanfare.

Woman of the Year Sarah Brown Smallhouse, Man of the Year Larry Hecker and Founders Award recipient Don Diamond were all taken by surprise in elaborate ruses that involved secrecy — and a few white lies.

The three were selected by the Chamber of Commerce after it asked the community for nominations in October. From those nominees, three were chosen by a chamber committee.

The trio will be formally honored on April 7 at a luncheon at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa.

Hecker, a local attorney and a longtime community advocate, was waiting at his Downtown office expecting to hear the governor's helicopter fly in when a team from the chamber surprised him with a bouquet and the news that he had been picked as the group's 2008 Man of the Year.

Hecker's friends, family and colleagues told him that Gov. Janet Napolitano was coming to visit him Monday, when instead he was "overwhelmed and totally speechless" by the sight of the news media, local business leaders and family members.

"Larry's always the connection, and he's always honest," City Councilwoman Nina Trasoff said. "He brings a calm voice that keeps us on focus."

Hecker's son Alex said his father always made time for his family, despite working long hours.

Hecker, 61, said his focus is on job creation through programs including Idea- Funding, which teaches entrepreneurs how to fund their businesses, and the University of Arizona's McGuire Center for Entrepreneurship.

"It's more critical now to create jobs than it ever has been," Hecker said. "We need to look within and commercialize the technologies that are abundant in our community."

### Men & Women of the Year 1952-2007

1952 Arthur Pack/Mary Jeffries  
Bruce

1953 Ted Walker/Margaret  
Knight

1954 Jay Howenstine/Mrs.  
George Harvill

1955 Peter Marroney/Esther  
Tang

1956 William Matthews/Betty  
Krucker

1957 Elmer Present/Helen B.  
Keeling

1958 Edgar Goyette/Laura  
Ganoung

1959 Samuel Goddard Jr./Ruth  
Irving

1960 James Durbin/Sarah  
Hirsch

1961 John Ryan/Dorothy  
Forbes

1962 William Mitchell/Helen  
D'Autremont

1963 Gilbert Bradley/Emily  
Richmond

1964 Joseph Brennan/Mary M.  
Raymond

1965 Elmer Thierman/Florence  
Reynolds

1966 Jacob  
Fruchthendler/Ruth E. Ohifest

Smallhouse, president of the Thomas R. Brown Foundation, a Tucson-area philanthropic foundation named for her father, thought she was headed to a meeting at the Arizona Inn to market Tucson. But when she arrived, she found a room full of people, champagne and flowers.

Smallhouse, whose father was an electronics pioneer and founder of Burr-Brown Corp., is also a member of the UA Eller College of Management economics advisory board as well as the board of the University of Arizona Foundation.

She was credited as being a force behind the creation of the Critical Path Institute, a UA partnership with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Pima County Supervisor Ray Carroll, who is Smallhouse's neighbor, said he sees her on a regular basis, and a constant topic of conversation is how to improve Tucson.

"I watched Sarah work tirelessly to make Tucson a better place," said Joaquin Ruiz, the dean of the UA College of Science. "She's driven to make our community better."

Most recently, Smallhouse said, she has turned her attention to the problem of buffelgrass, noting that more people must understand the serious threat that the invasive plant poses.

"Buffelgrass education is a very urgent need," Smallhouse said.

Diamond, chairman of Diamond Ventures Inc., was surprised at his Monday morning board meeting when he was presented with chamber's Founder's Award.

Diamond, 80, has been in Tucson since 1965 and has developed vast expanses of Arizona land.

Diamond and his family also have given time and money to the community.

The Diamonds recently gave \$15 million for the construction of the Diamond Children's Hospital, expected to open at University Medical Center in 2010, the chamber noted.

But Diamond said philanthropy in Tucson is going to suffer over the next few years, and he and his family have budgeted accordingly.

"Tucson has a reputation of putting money back in the community, but the next two years will be tough," Diamond said.

View a list of past Man and Woman of the Year award winners at [www.azstarbiz.com](http://www.azstarbiz.com)

#### **Men & Women of the Year 1952-2007**

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**1953 Ted Walker/Margaret Knight**

**1954 Jay Howenstine/Mrs. George Harvill**

**1955 Peter Marroney/Esther Tang**

**1956 William Matthews/Betty Krucker**

**1957 Elmer Present/Helen B. Keeling**

**1967 George Rosenberg/Lydia Paulsen**

**1968 Morris Udall/Katie Dusenberry**

**1969 Douglas Holsclaw/Deborah Jacquin**

**1970 Clermont Loper/Ann Boice**

**1971 Richard Riley/Ann Soelter**

**1972 William Scott/Mary Acosta**

**1973 Fred Snowden/Alene Smith**

**1974 John Collins/Sr. Kathleen Clark**

**1975 Edward Frohling/Alva B. Torres**

**1976 Edward Weil/Norma Niblett**

**1977 Rev. Roland Brammeier/Helen Schaefer**

**1978 Leonard F. Skrobel/Ann-Eve Johnson**

**1979 Jack D. Davis/Dee O'Neill**

**1980 Soleng Tom/Laura T. Almquist**

**1981 Jim Click/Mary Peachin**

**1982 Buck O'Rielly/Gail Kershner Riggs**

**1983 Leon Levy/Judith L. Tyree**

**1984 Larry Brown/Charlotte Harris**

**1985 Ed Butterbaugh/Jannie Cox**

**1986 James E. Neihart/Edith S. Auslander**

**1987 Don Shropshire/Brenda Viner**

**1988 Floyd Sedlmayr Jr./Alamo Reaves**

**1989 Bob R. Pennington/Dorothy H. Finley**

- 1958 Edgar Goyette/Laura Ganoung
- 1959 Samuel Goddard Jr./Ruth Irving
- 1960 James Durbin/Sarah Hirsch
- 1961 John Ryan/Dorothy Forbes
- 1962 William Mitchell/Helen D'Autremont
- 1963 Gilbert Bradley/Emily Richmond
- 1964 Joseph Brennan/Mary M. Raymond
- 1965 Elmer Thierman/Florence Reynolds
- 1966 Jacob Fruchthendler/Ruth E. Ohifest
- 1967 George Rosenberg/Lydia Paulsen
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- 1993 Hank Oyama/Linda Yocum
- 1994 James F. Ronstadt/Sarah R. Simmons
- 1995 Stephen E. Jewett/Patricia G. Escher
- 1996 Burt Kinerk/Anna Jolivet
- 1997 U.S. Rep. Jim Kolbe/Slivy E. Cotton
- 1998 Jay Gonzales/Linda Lohse
- 1999 James Sakrison/Sally S. Drachman
- 2000 Michael Hard/Barbara Peck
- 2001 Richard G. Fimbres/Judge Leslie Miller
- 2002 Hal Ashton/Betsy Bolding
- 2003 Bill Valenzuela/Dorothy Kret
- 2004 Jim Livengood/Mary B. McCorkle
- 2005 Dave Sitton/Jan Leshner
- 2006 Humberto Lopez/Nanette Warner
- 2007 Steve Lynn/Daisy Jenkins

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