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Hardcastles honored as SC Kentuckians of the Year

By DON SERGENT dsergent@bgdailynews.com

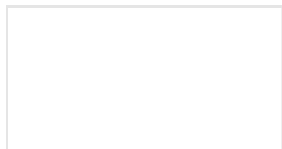
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Charles Hardcastle (holding award) and his wife Carolyn Hardcastle (seated) were honored Thursday as South Central Kentuckians of the Year by the Community Foundation. They were joined at the event by (from left) daughter Colleen Hardcastle, grandson Patrick Anderson and daughter Cheryl Anderson.

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MORE INFORMATION



Charles Hardcastle calls himself “just an instigator,” downplaying his own role in building successful



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Community Foundation honors Jim, Rita Scott

businesses and winning local political offices over a long career.

That instigating, though, has included philanthropic work that continues to bring plenty of attention and more than a few awards to the lifelong Warren County resident.

The latest example came Thursday, when Hardcastle and his wife, Carolyn Hardcastle, were honored as 2022 South Central Kentuckians of the Year.



“I’m just trying to help promote philanthropy,” Charles Hardcastle said after receiving the award during a lunchtime event at the National Corvette Museum that served as a fundraiser for the Community Foundation.

Their philanthropic efforts led to the Hardcastles being honored Thursday at a luncheon attended by more than 320 people.

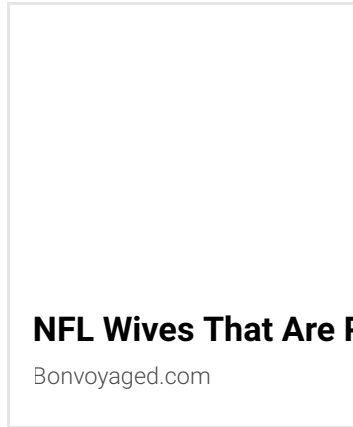
A 1951 graduate of Alvaton High School and 1956 graduate of Western Kentucky University, Charles Hardcastle achieved success with BG Chemical and its successor Consolidated Paper Group as well as with Citizens First Bank.

“You just find the best people you can and get out of their way and let them do good work,” said Charles Hardcastle, who also served 12 years as a magistrate on Warren Fiscal Court and four years as Bowling Green mayor.

His business success allowed Charles Hardcastle and his wife to give of their time and resources to a number of charitable organizations.

The couple’s \$1.5 million gift to the Kentucky Museum at WKU led to the museum building being renamed the Charles Hardcastle Kentucky Building last year.

They also established the Charles Hardcastle Endowed Fund for Excellence at WKU to help deserving students.



A longtime member of the Bowling Green Rotary Club, Charles Hardcastle was instrumental in starting the club's "Adopt-A-Class" scholarship fund in 1991 that has helped many underprivileged youngsters realize their dreams of attending college.

Carolyn Hardcastle, a former mathematics instructor at WKU, has been a leader in Bowling Green's Junior Women's Club and the Jayceettes.

Her philanthropic work is recognized at Lost River Cave, which is home to the Carolyn Hardcastle Bridge to Nature.

Among those praising the work of the Hardcastles on Thursday was Joe Natcher, former owner of Southern Foods (now Reinhart Foodservice).

“He was my financial backer for Southern Foods, and he has been a mentor to me,” Natcher said. “Charles is always teaching and trying to affect the quality of life of those around him.”

Those efforts have led to the Hardcastles becoming the 11th winners of the South Central Kentuckians of the Year Award. They join such other prominent philanthropists as Jim and Rita Scott, Fred Higgins, John and Linda Kelly and Robert and Cora Jane Spiller.

Jennifer Wethington, executive director of the Community Foundation, said the annual award ceremony not only honors those who

have given back to the community but also “raises awareness about the importance of philanthropy.”

Wethington said the Community Foundation awarded more than \$1.2 million in grants to 65 agencies in 2021 and has awarded more than \$7 million in grants since its inception in 1995.

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