



Knights of Columbus
St. John the Beloved
Council 11796

2019 Family of the Year Award

Our Family of the Year is a rich mixture of talent, professionalism, culture and the better instincts that our creator has blessed each of us with.

The youngest member of the trio is an outstanding young woman who volunteered for our council's larger events before going off to college and earning her degree.

The distaff member of the couple is an accomplished professional who performs in annual local performances of Tchaikovsky's ballet *The Nutcracker Suite*. And, while "distaff" means female, it is also defined as a spindle on which wool is spun prior to making woven material to form a warm high-quality garment. So, as the rod that forms the basis for building a family, that alternate definition would also apply here. Like her husband, she volunteers her time and talents at our Fish Fry dinners and many other council events.

He joined our council in August 2005 and proceeded to get his second degree a month later and his third degree two months after that. He earned his fourth degree in 2018. He has served our council in the roles of Deputy Grand Knight, Chancellor and Grand Knight. He is currently our Trustee 3. A member of the Cardinal Gibbons Assembly, he presently serves as its Faithful Scribe. At the State level, he also currently serves as our District Deputy.

Not one to remain idle (Who would have guessed?), he has been co-chair of our Fish Fry dinners since 2017; been on the council's Recruitment Committee since 2018 and has been our Community Director for the past two years. He also established the council's "Rides for Parishioners Program".

There were periods when he couldn't do everything he wanted for the council but we can understand that his travel schedule made that impossible. DuPont would send him to Germany for two weeks, bring him home for two or three days and then send him to China for a month. Vietnam, Japan and a couple of other countries were added to his schedule from time to time just to keep things interesting (or, given corporate decision-making processes, perhaps just to confuse the bejesus out of him). At any rate, he got a brutal introduction to jet lag.

I mentioned a mixture of cultures earlier. He's American born. His lovely wife is Japanese by birth. They met while he was in Japan on business. One look and he was hooked. Now Japan has had several thousand years to develop a rich culture and social customs. One of these is respect for elders. So, it came as no surprise to our good knight that he would need to get the approval to marry her from her grandmother before the rest of the family would even let him in the door. It didn't help things that natives are known for not giving away their thinking through their facial expressions and Japanese is a logographic printed language known as "kanji" used with syllabic scripts of hiragana and katakana.

So, he goes to grandma to seek her approval to marry her granddaughter. She receives him passively, says something he doesn't understand and then, without indicating her approval or disapproval, dismisses him. He then goes to his intended and asks "What did she say?" She tells him grandma likes his nose and explains that that, in Japan, is a sign of approval. He's relieved and happy. He doesn't know that grandma later spoke to granddaughter and said "As intelligent, talented and attractive as you are, that's the best you could bring me?" Okay, I made that last part up but it could have happened. He was subsequently accepted into the family based on grandma's approval and the couple lived happily ever after.

And now, without further ado, it is my pleasure to present our 2019 Family of the Year Award to Joseph and Eri Koskol.

Awarded December 15, 2019

Thomas Pollutri, Grand Knight