



Knights of Columbus

St. John the Beloved

Council 11796

2019 Knight of the Year Award

As I look around the room this evening I am filled with a sense of wonder at the number of men and their ladies gathered here who, in their pursuit of living our core values of Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism, have given so much of their time and talents to our church, our community and our council. It is therefore both a burden and a joy to select just one to be honored as Knight of the Year.

Our honoree this year joined the Knights in June of 1983. That same year he married and took a job at the Savannah River Site where tritium and plutonium 239 were being produced. Getting married and getting work making nuclear weapons components at the same, I think it safe to assume this man liked living dangerously at the ripe old age of 24. Either that or he had no idea what he was doing.

Well, at least one of those decisions was the right one. His wife is a talented, first class lady filled with a joie de vivre; compassion; a dedication to helping others; and, just someone you want to count among your friends. As for the other decision, you can draw your own conclusions from the fact that DuPont shut down Reactor C shortly after he started and he now works in the much less volatile halls of academe.

As life would have it, the demands of raising a family and managing a career drew him away from the Knights for a time. But in March of 2001, he re-entered the

Knights as a member of our council and, for that, we should be grateful. Re-energized (or perhaps just nuclear powered), he took on the responsibilities of council Recorder in 2003. This was followed by terms as Deputy Grand Knight, Grand Knight, Chancellor, Trustee 1, Trustee 2, Trustee 3 and Financial Secretary or 17 consecutive years of service.

He has also been an active participant in or directed multiple council programs during that same period. These include starting our Souper Bowl Sub Sales program; providing meals at the Ronald McDonald House; helping at our annual Souper Bowl Sunday Food Drives; creating our take-out Fish Dinner program; acting as stand-in Facilitator of the council's Annual Car Show; and volunteering at the parish's carnival among others.

Nuclear powered or not, it should be noted here that he did have to call in familial support for many of these exertions. Remember the lady I mentioned earlier? Yup, that's the one. A little family secret should also be mentioned here. She works for Delmarva Power & Light. So, while they work well as a team it means she can quite literally turn his lights out any time he disagrees with her.

His son also joined our council as a Knight as soon as he turned 18. Now, I know for a fact that he couldn't wait to become a knight but then he went off to college to become a lawyer. Maybe to learn how to defend himself from his dad's attempts to volunteer him for anything else? Time will tell.

The council has recognized this consanguineal ménage with the 2015 Family of the Year Award. It has also recognized him as Knight of the Month in September 2006; again in June 2010 and November 2011; and, yet again in June of 2014. Now, it is appropriate to recognize this individual with our Order's equivalent of the Nobel Prize. So, it is my pleasure to present the 2019 Knight of the Year Award to Sir William K. Harris, Jr.

Awarded December 15, 2019

Thomas Pollutri, Grand Knight