

Media Release

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For Immediate Release

May 25, 2016

Fayetteville veteran regains vision, earns achievement award



From the left are Edward Howell, Jr., his wife Johna, Springdale Lions Club Vice President Kenny Bartle, and DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Carolyn Jackson. Howell was named the area's Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). His employer, Walgreens, was recognized as an outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.

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Howell said he was grateful that when he started to experience issues with his vision, his employer provided accommodations and adjusted his job duties so that he could maintain his employment.

Howell said he was diagnosed with nuclear cataracts in both eyes in May, 2015. Additionally, in 2014,

Edward "Ed" Howell, Jr., of Fayetteville has been named the area's outstanding Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB).

DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Carolyn Jackson nominated Howell, 71, for the achievement award because of his determination to overcome adversity and succeed at work. Howell has been a Sales Clerk with Walgreens in Springdale for four years. He takes pride in his work and enjoys interacting with the customers.

The COY award presentation was made May 25, at a meeting of the Springdale Lions Club, held at the Western Sizzlin restaurant. Howell was selected from an area that includes Washington, Madison, Newton and Searcy Counties.

his vision problems included astigmatism, presbyopia (farsightedness caused by loss of elasticity of the lens of the eye), dermatochalasis (sagging eyelids), and brow ptosis (descent of the brow). Fortunately, his vision was able to be restored through surgeries.

Howell was not aware of DSB services until he was approached by the DSB counselor at his place of employment. Howell said he appreciated the services he received from DSB. The agency paid the costs of his eye surgeries and related medical treatment that the Veterans Administration didn't cover.

Later Howell referred one of his co-workers to the agency for assistance with vision problems.

Howell has a long work history. He served in the military and was on duty during the Cuban missile crisis. He retired from Wal-Mart as a district manager after 20 years. He was a manager at Sterling's for 10 years. He worked 15 years at miscellaneous jobs for himself and others.

He has been married to his wife Johna for 47 years.

This is the ninth year that DSB has given Consumer of the Year awards to recognize individuals who have managed their rehabilitation plans, gained marketable skills, secured good jobs, and become role models for others. An overall state winner will be selected at the end of the year.

DSB provides vocational rehabilitation services to adults who are blind or severely visually impaired and whose goal is successful employment. The division also serves youth and older blind individuals. For information about DSB's programs and services, visit the DSB website at <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx> or call 1-800-960-9270, 501-682-5463, or TDD 501-682-0093.