

# IFEA Volunteer of the Year Award 2018



## Semi-Finalists

The IFEA Volunteer of the Year Program rewards our member's supporters who give so unselfishly of their time. Although, annually, one individual must ultimately be named Volunteer of the Year, hundreds are recognized by our member organizations and affiliated associations as the backbone of our industry. Whether small or large, special events and festivals throughout the world consistently bring to our attention the talents of their most committed volunteers. To select one is a daunting task; to learn the stories behind their contributions has been an honor. The following outstanding volunteers were selected as Semi-Finalists in the 2018 IFEA Volunteer of the Year Awards Competition.

### John White

**Nominated by The Parade Company, Detroit, MI Holly Blake**



John White has volunteered in every Parade for The Parade Company from 1958 to 2017, so it goes without saying he is definitely one of their amazing, long-time volunteers who has been an incredible asset. Over the years, John has volunteered as a Banner Carrier, Balloon Handler, Band Marshal and Clown. For the last two years, John has

helped with their Distinguished Clown Corp Breakfast on Parade morning. Additionally, he also serves as a tour guide for their Studio Tours. John not only has a wealth of knowledge about the Parade, but he also has a warm, personable demeanor that makes him one of their best tour guides. They often call on him for specialty tours, such as our Valentine's Couple Tours and VIP groups. Tour guests who have experienced his tours give him glowing reviews, and often tell their friends and family who book a tour with The Parade Company – to be sure to request John!

### Michael Montgomery

**Nominated by the Kentucky Derby Festival, Louisville, KY**



Michael Montgomery has volunteered with the Kentucky Derby Festival for 12 years, dedicating hours of service to implement not just one, but multiple Festival events. Michael has a regular full-time job, but takes time off to help with the Kentucky Derby Festival. He considers volunteering for the Festival as his way of giving back to the

community. Michael was first invited to join the Derby Festival as a volunteer after a Festival board member witnessed Michael's enthusiasm for military aircraft and knowledge of flying at a separate event. He immediately got involved with the Thunder Over Louisville Committee to help in the Command Center and has only gotten more involved since. He has served as point of

contact for participating aircraft in the show, organized tours in the command center, worked with media and much more.

### Patty Matthews

**Nominated by the Greater Columbus Arts Council, Columbus, OH**



Patty has been volunteering on the Columbus Arts Festival Steering Committee for more than 20 years. To say she has a passion is an understatement. Patty grew up loving the Columbus Arts Festival. Once out of grad school, she knew it was time she could spend volunteering at the Columbus Arts Festival and she is in

her 21st year with the festival. Patty won the first *Columbus Arts Festival Gwen Scott Volunteer of the Year Award* in 2016, named in honor Gwen Scott, a long-time Festival volunteer who passed away in 2016. This annual award is designed to honor individuals who have contributed at an extraordinary level of dedication to the Arts Festival.

### Russ Plieseis

**Nominated by Downtown Tempe Authority, Tempe, AZ**



Russ Plieseis has volunteered for the Fantasy of Lights Opening Night Parade for 22 of the Parade's 24 years! Initially the Kiwanis Club of Tempe created and organized the parade and as a Kiwanian, Russ was involved from early on. In 2006, Russ took over leadership of the parade as

parade manager, where he obtained city permits, determined the parade route, found sponsorships and volunteers, recruited parade units as well as food and other entertainment. Russ has made the Parade a success for over two decades. His leadership and support have created a memorable holiday parade for hundreds of thousands of people in the Tempe area.

To view information on this year's winner and past Volunteer of the Year winners, [Click Here](#).

For more information about the IFEA Volunteer of the Year Award, [Click Here](#)