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NEWS

Guild presents Don King Awards

Recipients are Bert Woodard, Time Out Youth and FOX Charlotte's Morgan Fogarty

by Matt Comer :: matt@goqnotes.com

The Charlotte Business Guild held their annual holiday "TOY" drive benefiting Time Out Youth and presented this year's Don King Awards on Dec. 16 at Uptown's Bechtler Museum of Modern Art.

Two individuals and a non-profit group received the annual awards, which recognize community members, businesses or organizations whose works embody the legacy of longtime Charlotte LGBT leader Don King. Community leader Burt Woodard, FOX Charlotte reporter and anchor Morgan Fogarty and Time Out Youth were this year's recipients.

A native of Pennsylvania, Fogarty came to Charlotte's FOX affiliate in 2005. When she first moved to Charlotte, she says, many of her preconceived notions about the South quickly faded away.

"When I moved here I was pleasantly surprised how a lot of these perceptions of what the South is don't ring true," Fogarty says. Yet, there are many issues she thinks still need improvement, especially when it comes to government accountability.

"This is a really unusual place, in that when you bring an issue to local government... anything that is unfavorable or doesn't paint them in the most positive light, the first reaction is to stick their heads in the sand and ignore it," she says. "There's not a lot of transparency, although everybody talks about

transparency and about communicating with the public. It's very difficult sometimes from a media point-of-view to really get answers."

In Fogarty's time here, her coverage of several LGBT social and political issues has brought important discussion of equality and progress to the forefront of city life. Her ability to report thoroughly, fairly and with sensitivity has earned her this year's Don King Bridge Builder Award. She says her management at FOX Charlotte has pushed for such fairness and balance.

"One of the things I've admired about my boss here is that he instills in his employees that our job in media to be the watchdog of government, to tell compelling stories and to be a voice for the voiceless," she says, adding she often gets teased by colleagues for her often-long and in-depth news reports.

"A lot of times important information, relevant information or information that provides context, history and background is cut from a story because of time and that's it," she says. "When you lose that, it doesn't make the story inaccurate but it can alter the way it is received. I fight really hard to make sure that when I have a story on a sensitive nature, something dealing with the LGBT community, that it is thorough and complete and if that means it takes an extra 30 seconds, so be it."

Like Fogarty, this year's Don King individual award winner also works in media. Bert Woodard has used his public relations skills to assist various LGBT community groups for nearly a decade.

In 2002, Woodard became a member of Charlotte's LGBT running group, FrontRunners. Commuting to and from Charlotte and Winston-Salem for work each day, he also joined Greensboro's Triad Business Guild and the Charlotte Business Guild. Later, Woodard became a Guild board member and officer. He says he's most proud of he and Kelley Doherty's efforts to strengthen and diversify the Charlotte Guild's membership.

"I'd heard it [Charlotte's group] was very small, almost all older men," Woodard recalls. "I thought Charlotte needed to have a good one and about the same time, Kelley Doherty got involved. She and I both worked very hard along with other people, to build membership." **more:** *This story continues online at goqnotes.com/9484.*

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