

Dr. Ahdieh named Citizen of the Year

by John Charles Robbins

Daily Journal Editor

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John Charles Robbins | Daily Journal Dr. Masoud Ahdieh reacts to being named Richmond County Citizen of the Year for 2012 by the Richmond County Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Masoud Ahdieh has been selected as the 2012 Richmond County Citizen of the Year by the Richmond County Chamber of Commerce.

"It brings me great pleasure to announce that we have selected local pediatrician Dr. Masoud Ahdieh, as the 2012 Citizen of the Year," said Terry Greene, chairman of the chamber's board of directors.

"Our selection committee had a big task this year but after reviewing all nominations they made one recommendation to our board and I feel they made the right choice in Dr. Ahdieh," Greene said.

Chamber President Emily Tucker led a group of chamber representatives into Dr. Ahdieh's office in Rockingham early Thursday morning and surprised him with the news. She was joined by Greene, John Jackson, vice chairman of the chamber board and CEO of FirstHealth Richmond Memorial Hospital, board member Jeff Smart, and Kristie Long, executive assistant at the chamber.

For more than 32 years, Dr. Ahdieh has been a familiar name to Richmond County and especially to area children. He is very active in his local business as well as civic and public affairs. Since moving to Richmond County, he has been active in the Rockingham Rotary Club and earned the Paul Harris Award.

In addition to being a health care leader, Ahdieh has been an active member of the community, helping pave the way for such endeavors as Discovery Place KIDS, serving on numerous boards and committees including terms as president of the Richmond County Medical Society, Chief of Staff at FirstHealth Richmond Memorial, and Richmond County Partnership for Children, the chamber said. He has also been active in the Human Relations Commission and has played a big part in the decline of infant mortality rates in the county.

"Dr. Ahdieh has been available above and beyond the call of duty to families in our county," said Melanie Wade Goodwin, a recipient of the Citizen of the Year Award in 2009.



Chamber President Emily Tucker, right, announced the surprise to Dr. Masoud Ahdieh at his office in Rockingham on Thursday morning.



Dr. Ahdieh and members of his staff.

The doctor's wife, Violet, gave him a big hug when she learned of the honor, with smiles all around the room from his staff.

Smart, a longtime friend of the doctor's, made it a point to attend on Thursday morning to enjoy in the surprise announcement. Smart said his father was involved in recruiting Dr. Ahdieh to Richmond County more than 30 years ago.

Smart said he was very pleased that the chamber chose the doctor for this year's honor. "Couldn't be a better choice," said Smart. "He is a wonderful man ... a first-class individual."



Dr. Ahdieh surrounded by his staff, wife Violet, and chamber officials.

Dr. Ahdieh said later that he was genuinely surprised by the chamber's announcement. "Yes, it was unusual. I wasn't expecting it," he said with a laugh.

He was pleased that the chamber representatives surprised him at his office with his staff on hand, including Violet who is the office manager.

"One person cannot do everything ... it's great to have all of them here and part of the good occasion.," he said.

When Dr. Ahdieh arrived in Richmond County in 1980 he was the first and only pediatrician in the county.

"I am very proud to be part of this community," he said.



The chamber will roll out the red carpet in a Hollywood style event to honor Dr. Ahdieh at the Chamber's Annual Banquet.

The event is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 24, at the Cole Auditorium on the campus of Richmond Community College in Hamlet. The event is open to the public. Tickets are on sale now at the chamber or online for \$40 per person. Sponsorships are also available. This year's event will begin with arrival and seating of guests at 6 p.m. followed by a business meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium honoring Dr. Ahdieh, and conclude with a celebration in the banquet rooms at 7:30 p.m. featuring music and heavy hors d'oeuvres.

The Citizen of the Year award is presented annually by the chamber and is recognized as the county's highest honor. The recipient is chosen based on factors regarding their contribution to the community

Pictured, from left, are: Jeff Smart, on the chamber board of directors; Board Chair Terry Greene; Dr. Ahdieh; and John Jackson, vice chairman of the chamber board and CEO of FirstHealth Richmond Memorial Hospital.

either during the year, or over the course of their lives.

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