Robert K. Agar, Jr. Volunteerism Award

Beginning in 1965, Berkshire United Way has annually selected as "Volunteer of the Year" a local volunteer whose personal commitment and dedication to the ideals of volunteerism was, in the judgement of others, truly exemplary. From 1965 through to 1980, 16 such awards were made to persons whose volunteer activity was closely associated with Berkshire United Way itself, or one of its affiliated agencies. Honorees during that period were:

1965  Daniel J. Miraglia - Catholic Youth Center  
1966  John L.E. Mangum - Association for Retarded Citizens  
1967  Sylvia & Arthur Koerber - Girl Scouts  
1968  Mrs. Richard E. Goodrich - Girls Club  
1969  Mrs. Lawrence J. Pierson - Social Service Index  
1970  Miss Katherine Soldo - Association for Retarded Citizens  
1971  Mrs. Samuel N. Stevenson - Camp Fire Girls  
1972  Mr. Robert C. Saydlowski - Red Cross  
1973  Mr. Robert E. Koch - Girl Scouts  
1974  Mr. John F. Connors - Boy's Club  
1975  Dr. Alfred Eramo - Association for Retarded Citizens  
1976  Mr. Lawrence W. Strattner - Boys Scouts, Great Trails Council  
1977  Mr. Angelo Valenti – Boys’ Club  
1978  General Electric Company and Employees  
1979  Mr. Robert W. Rose - United Way of Central Berkshire  
1980  Mr. Bertram G. Hines - G.E. Good Neighbor Fund

In 1981, following the untimely death of Mr. Robert K. Agar, Jr., a member of the Berkshire United Way Board of Directors, the Award was renamed to honor his memory.

That year, and again in 1982 and 1983, the primary criteria for nomination of this award was a high level of volunteer activity in support of Berkshire United Way and/or its affiliated agencies. Honorees in those years were:

1981  Mr. James Craig - (Co-recipients) U.W. of Central Berkshire  
      Mr. Albert E. Easton  
1982  Ms. Mitzi Scelsi - United Cerebral Palsy  
1983  Attorney Cynthia Spinola, Berkshire United Way

Beginning in 1984, a conscious decision was made by volunteers to reposition the Agar Award as an honor open to any individual whose significant commitment to the ideals and spirit of volunteer service to the community was exemplary and worthy of emulation. The previous restriction to activity in support of the "United Way Family" was dropped. Honorees to date who have met these criteria are:

1984  Mrs. Kelly Blau, Heart of the Berkshires Health Fair  
1985  July 4th Parade Committee  
1986  John R. Downie, Southern Berkshire United Community Fund  
1987  Samuel H. Boxer  
1988  Evette Giftos  
1989  Archie DeAngelus  
      Charles DeAngelus  
1990  Ann H. Trabulski  
1991  Patricia Carlino  
1992  Michele Orabona  
1993  Paul Matthews  
1994  Joseph Collias
Thomas F. Cooney Award
This award, first introduced in 1982, honors past Campaign Chairman, Thomas F. Cooney, and was established following his untimely and accidental death. The Award is particularly unique in that, subsequent to his United Way service in Berkshire County, Mr. Cooney moved to Fall River, Massachusetts where he also eventually served as that community’s United Way Campaign Chairman. In his memory, the United Way of Greater Fall River has also established an annual "Thomas F. Cooney Award" for outstanding volunteer service.

Here in the Berkshires, the Cooney Award has evolved into a presentation which honors Berkshire United Way volunteers who have a significant and long-term history of activity in support of the annual campaign. While past campaign chairs are not excluded from consideration, greater weight is placed on continuous, year-to-year volunteer commitment to the campaign. The Cooney Award is presented, with the recipient's foreknowledge, during the September Campaign Kick-off by the prior year’s recipient. Past recipients include:

1982  Raymond LeBeau
1984  Robert Petricca
1985  Martin J. Cooney
1986  Jeffrey P. Rayner
1987  Edward A. Van Dyke
1988  Mary Shea-Knight
1989  Mary K. O'Brien
1990  Paul Matthews
1992  Richard Whitehead
1993  Nicholas Boraski
1994  J. Williar Dunlaevy
1995  William F. Semanie
1996  David W. Murphy
1997  William M. Murphy
1998  Richard L. Whitehead
1999  Skip Thompson
2000  Edward O'Keefe
2001  Joan M McFalls
2002  Carole Siegel
2003  G E Elfun Volunteers
2004  Bob Norris
2005  Ruth Blodgett
2006  Ellen Ruberto
2007  Kathy Noto
2008  Denise Marshall
2009  John Bissell
2010  Berkshire Bank
2011  Josh Billings Runaground
2012  C. Jeffrey Cook
2013  Brenda Burdick
2014  Jim Murray and Ray Murray
2015  Cindy Shogry-Raimer
2016  Berkshires United Way
J. Edward Dery Memorial Award
This award was first presented in 1997 to honor the memory of Ed Dery who, passed away at a young age, but left a legacy of giving and caring for his community that few can ever hope to match. This is not an annual award. It is presented to honor extraordinary commitment to the improvement of the quality of life for all in Berkshire County by an individual, foundation or organization. Past recipients include:

1997 Gary P Scarafoni  
2001 Robert A Wells  
2003 Nicholas Boraski  
2005 Susan Lombard  
2013 Marion Simon  
2014 Peter Lafayette  
2018 Gene Dellea

Raymond P. Brien Leadership Award
First introduced in 2002, this award honors outstanding leadership, commitment and performance by an individual affiliated with a human services agency in Berkshire County.

Past recipients include:
2002 Carolyn Mower Burns, Executive Director Berkshire Ctr for Families & Children  
2003 Ken Singer, Executive Director of Berkshire County Arc.

Labor Award
First introduced in 1995, this award recognizes a member of the labor community who has shown exceptional commitment to Berkshire United Way's campaign, allocations, or committee involvement. Past recipients:

1995 Michael Filpi  
1996 Richard Avalle  
1997 Jim Curley  
1998 No Selection  
1999 No Selection  
2000 Patrick Mele, Jr.  
2001 Michael Callahan  
2002 No Selection  
2003 National Letter Carrier’s Branch #286
**Helping Hands/Caring Heart**
First introduced in 1999, this award recognizes an unsung hero in our community—one who quietly, with little fanfare or recognition, makes our community a better place through volunteer efforts. Past recipients include:

1999  Joan Kass  
2000  Ed Skolletsky  
2001  Charles Butch Fezzie  
2002  Catherine Soldo  
2003  Reverend Carl Towley  
2004  UNICO Volunteers-Pittsfield Chapter  
2005  Daniel Dillon

Following Daniel Dillon’s retirement from numerous years of service to Berkshire United Way and the community, this award was renamed the Daniel Dillon Helping Hands/Caring Heart Award. Recipients of this award include:

2006  Ralph “Doc” Casey & Berkshire Youth United  
2009  Phyllis DeMartino  
2011  PCTV  
2012  Greylock Federal Credit Union  
2014  Kelly Marion  
2015  Janet Dohoney  
2016  Brenda Petell  
2017  Julie Salatino  
2018  Cara Davis  
2019  Arthur Milano

**Ruth P. and Nicholas Boraski Leaders in Philanthropy (Leadership Award)**  
This award honors an individual, couple or group who have demonstrated, by their personal example as well as financial commitment, their dedication to improving the quality of life for everyone in our community regardless of their means. Past recipients include:

2006  John and Chara Haas  
2009  Robert and Claudia Wells  
2010  Drs. Armand and Donald Feigenbaum  
2011  Josephine and Louise Crane  
2012  SABIC Innovative Plastics, 2012  
2013  Berkshire Life, a Guardian Company  
2014  J. Williar and Susan Dunlaevy  
2015  Perri Petricca  
2016  Gary Johnson  
2018  Chris and Kim Mathews  
2019  Virginia Stanton Smith