

**For Immediate Release**

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Janet Abernathy to Receive WCCF Louis E. Waller Humanitarian Award

The Washington County Community Foundation is pleased to announce that Janet S. Abernathy will receive its Louis E. Waller Humanitarian Award, which recognizes a local individual or organization devoted to the promotion of human welfare and the advancement of social reform as evidenced by humanitarian deeds in the community, whether local, national or international. The award is named in honor of the late Louis E. Waller III, a past Chairman and one of the Founding Trustees of the WCCF. When Waller was presented with the inaugural award in a private ceremony in 2008, he remarked, “I am deeply moved and humbled to have others recognize value in the activities that have been so important to me over the years. This award truly is the culminating honor of my lifetime.”



*Janet S. Abernathy*

Janet Abernathy has touched her community. According to Washington Hospital President and CEO Telford Thomas, “She volunteers her time, expertise and wisdom in an unassuming and humble manner without expectation of recognition or reward. Her efforts have impacted lives in many ways as a teacher, mentor and all-around model of grace, compassion and understanding.”

Don’t call Janet Abernathy a humanitarian; she’ll dodge the title like a champion boxer. “A lot of people do more than I do,” she protests, “People just ask me to do things, and I do them. I don’t know how to say ‘No.’ I just don’t.”

She has said “yes” to an astonishing number of charities, good causes, church activities and volunteer opportunities since she and her late husband, Abe Abernathy, moved to Washington in 1955. Her lifetime tradition of helping started when she was a Girl Scout during World War II, volunteering at a hospital to help ease the nursing shortage. She enjoyed it enough to choose a career in nursing, where she met her husband, a doctor.

“Abe was always a volunteer. I guess he motivated me.” Over the years, she volunteered at the Washington Hospital Medical Library, served on the board of the United Way, served as the Secretary of the WCCF, helped countless charities, taught Sunday school and continues to serve on the board of ABCDE Fund,

founded by her husband. “He grew up in Georgia, and blacks weren’t getting a fair shake,” she recalls. He started the Abernathy Black Community Development Educational Fund (ABCDE) to help black students pursue higher education. “He couldn’t give full tuition, “she reminisces, “He invested what he could, and tried to give them books and fees.” Since her husband’s death, she serves on the ABCDE committee which interviews all the scholarship applicants. “They’re high class students, nice kids. They have big dreams.”

As the recipient of the Louis E. Waller Humanitarian Award, Abernathy will be able to do even more to bolster those dreams. She has designated the award’s \$1,000 grant to the ABCDE Fund.

Janet Abernathy says she’s not a humanitarian; she’s a housewife. “It wasn’t always easy or convenient, but I do like people. I grew up liking people.”

The award will be presented at the WCCF Legacy Gala on June 3 at the Holiday Inn Meadowlands. Reservations may be made by calling the WCCF at 724-222-6330. The WCCF accepts applications year round for the Louis E. Waller Humanitarian Award. Check [www.wccf.net](http://www.wccf.net) for details and an application.

*Dorothy Tecklenburg contributed to this story.*

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