

That was the significant contribution by the two honorees of Leadership Tri-County's 2017 tributes on Tuesday night.

Claudia Gibson Greenwood and Vance Mills, both whose home base is in Knox County, were the recipients of this year's awards, presented during the organization's annual banquet at the Corbin Center.

Although Mills died in a tragic accident nearly 22 years ago, his legacy of creating jobs in the Tri-County area and his dedication to providing more opportunities to Knox, Whitley, and Laurel county residents is one of his accolades that earned him the Luminary Award.

"Nobody wanted to see the local area benefit as much as Vance Mills," said his long-time friend, Steve Rhodes, who presented the award to Mills' widow, Marie. "Nearly every family in Knox County either had a family member or a friend who worked for him."

Mills was a businessman who was key in the establishment of American Fidelity Bank and other area businesses. Although he traveled the world, he was most comfortable in his native southeastern Kentucky area where his family still resides.

The Leader of the Year Award was presented to Claudia Gibson Greenwood, whose impact has reached uncountable areas of her community. Greenwood retired from the Knox County School system after 27 years, then went on to serve as an administrative assistant for the Knox County Attorney's Office from 2004 to 2015.

Karen Kelly, with the UNITE program, praised Greenwood for her concern for others and her concern for her community.

"Any time you say you need anything, Claudia is the first one to be there," Kelly said.

Greenwood's resume demonstrates her dedication, listing her involvement with numerous civic and church organizations. She has worked in the areas of substance abuse prevention, school professional development coordinator, and has been honored as Woman of the Year by the Corbin Times-Tribune and Knox County Chamber of Commerce, as well as KCEOC Cumberland Valley Area Development District's Volunteer of the Year.

Leadership Tri-County was chartered in 1987 with its first graduating class in 1988. This organization derived from the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Kentucky and was organized by Dr. William Hacker, Tom Handy and Jim Oaks from the Tri-County area.

Leadership Tri-County's mission is to identify and develop the leadership opportunities in the Tri-County area by joining community members from southeastern Kentucky together to learn more about their communities.

The program brings together class members for sessions that include the law and the judicial system, communications, government, and health, to name a few.

Persons interested in participating in this program can visit the Leadership Tri-County's Facebook page or their website at www.leadershiptrico.org.

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