

News from the City of Dearborn

Dearborn – Clean and Safe

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Department of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Popular Dearborn resident named City's 2007 Veteran of the Year

DEARBORN, Mich. – Frank Pelaccio, a well-respected veteran and lifetime Dearborn resident, will be honored as the City's 2007 Veteran of the Year during Dearborn's annual Veterans Day ceremony on Sunday, Nov. 11.

The public is invited to attend the ceremony, which begins at 11 a.m. and will be held in the City Council Chambers of City Hall. City Hall is located at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Schaefer.

"Frank Pelaccio served his country in the United States Navy, and came home to spend decades serving the people of Dearborn, in particular our veterans. This is an honor that is well-deserved," said Richard Prezbienda, commander of the Dearborn Allied War Veterans Council (DAWVC).

A longtime DAWVC member and former DAWVC commander, Pelaccio has spent almost 20 years organizing veteran-related events and fundraisers, including helping to plan the City's Memorial Day parade each year for the last several years.

The Fordson High School graduate said he found it easy to become involved with veterans' groups because he is surrounded by such great company.

"Once I started becoming active with the veterans, it didn't take me long to really become involved. I soon found myself another family," Pelaccio said.

Pelaccio served from 1962 to 1964 as a member of the Navy's SeaBees – the construction battalions which build everything from bases to airstrips.

His battalion earned four ribbons during his time of service: The President Unit Citation, The Navy Marine Corps Expedition Ribbon for service during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, National Defense Ribbon and the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

After returning home, Pelaccio worked for the City of Dearborn for 30 years, retiring as the assistant supervisor of the Water Division in the Department of Public Works.

Since his retirement, he's dedicated most of his spare time to veterans' causes.

"People used to ask me: What do you do in retirement? I told them that all they had to do is join the DAWVC and they'll keep busy," he said, laughing. "I enjoy it very much. I feel like I'm helping to keep the camaraderie going."

Throughout his years of volunteer service with the DAWVC, he has held several leadership roles, including as commander of the DAWVC in 2001 and as a founding member of the group's ritual team, which conducts remembrance activities at funerals of deceased veterans.

He continues to serve as a co-chairperson of the Memorial Day Parade and also helps plan the City's annual Veterans Day ceremony, Korean War ceremony and Flag Day ceremony.

During the holiday season, Pelaccio enjoys delivering gifts to patients at local VA (Veterans Administration) hospitals.

A part of numerous Dearborn veteran organizations, Pelaccio has been commander of American Legion Fort Dearborn Post 364 and a charter member and vice-director of American Legion Riders of Post 364.

He holds the office of chaplain with Archie Kelly VFW Post 2107, and is a committee chairman of Vietnam Veterans of America James Huard Chapter 267.

Pelaccio was involved in the process which brought the Vietnam Moving Wall Memorial to Dearborn in 2000, along with Vietnam veteran and 2006 Dearborn Veteran of the Year Joe Stumpo and former Mayor Michael A. Guido.

Pelaccio serves as junior vice commander of AMVETS Gen. Henry Dearborn Post 4, and belongs to the Voiture Nationale 40/8 2001, the Mobile Construction Battalion #6 Association and the Dearborn Italian American Club.

Because Pelaccio is a self-described "people person," he said he has a great time making new friends and meeting dignitaries at special events.

"It's all very gratifying to me," he said.

He and his wife, Pamela, have been married for 41 years and have three sons – Carlo, Joseph and Thomas – and a daughter, Deborah.

In what remains of his spare time, Pelaccio also enjoys golfing and fishing.

PHOTO CAPTION: Frank Pelaccio.

[NOTE ~ If you did not receive a copy of the photograph that accompanies this news release, and would like one, call Randy Coble at (313) 943-2347.]

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