



Riverwoods Plantation Named Association of Year

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By Joe Adams

jadams@becker-poliakoff.com

TEL (239) 433-7707

FAX (239) 433-5933

As a follow-up to last week's column, a few more local announcements should be shared.

Riverwoods Plantation RV Resort Condominium Association named best of year:

The South Gulfcoast Chapter of CAI recently named Riverwoods Plantation RV Resort Condominium, located in Estero, the "Association of the Year." This award is presented to recognize the best local community association, excelling in all facets of their operation. These associations serve as an example to the industry and encourage educational and professional growth.

I reached out to James Gratton, the Association's President and Rachel Barnell, the Manager. The folks at Riverwoods proudly noted that this is their third award in the past decade or so, and that they have been inducted into CAI's Hall of Fame. When asked the secret to success, Barnell said: "Although our Community is almost thirty years old, our seven-member Board, our management team, and our numerous volunteers continuously strive to improve our grounds and common facilities while maintaining our high standards of excellence. We are honored to be recognized."

Seven Lakes Community Honored with Humanitarian Award:

Another local association, also always on the short list for awards, is the Seven Lakes Condominium Community located in

South Fort Myers. This year, Seven Lakes received CAI's "Humanitarian Award" which is named after Robert A. White, a well-regarded Community Association Manager from the Fort Myers area who passed away several years ago. Fittingly, Bob was also the General Manager at Seven Lakes for many years.

I contacted the Association and asked for comments from Board President, John Gamble and General Manager, Jim Schneider. Seven Lakes' representatives told me that the Seven Lakes owners give their time, talents, and money for several good causes throughout the year. For example, the Association hosts a golf outing where the proceeds are donated to homeless veterans. The list of charitable initiatives from this Community are too numerous to print and indeed impressive. Fundraisers for Haiti earthquake victims, needy families, blood drives, and purchase of school supplies for underprivileged children are but a few.

Schneider said: "It's one of the awards we have received that we are most proud of, because it shows the true character of our owners." In a day and age when condo associations are usually depicted in media as petty or dysfunctional, it is truly heartening to see condo communities set such an admirable example of community service.

Local Manager Remembered: The local community association management industry lost one of its most respected members with the passing of Richard LaPosta on October 31, 2011.

I had known Dick for some 25 years and had the pleasure of representing a number of associations which Dick's firm, Gulf Shores Community Association Management, also managed.

I recently chatted with Dick's life and business partner, his wife, Diane. When I asked what she thought Dick would like best to be remembered for, she did not hesitate in stating it was his personal pride in every association he managed. Dick was also perhaps somewhat unique in management in that he looked at the homeowners

as an integral part of the partnership that is necessary to successfully run a community, not an enemy force to be avoided.

Diane tells me that Dick had a special fondness for the Foxmoor Community located in North Fort Myers, which he had managed for some 20 years. In fact, even when Dick knew that his time was short, he insisted on being driven around the community every day to make sure his standards, and the expectations of his client, were being met.

Dick leaves four children, nine grandchildren, and four great grandchildren, along with Diane. Dick was a good guy and left us too early at age 72.

Joe Adams has focused his practice on the representation of community associations since 1987, and has provided legal counsel to well over one thousand community associations throughout the state. Joe has served as Chairman of the State Advisory Council on Condominiums and has written this column since 1995.

Send questions to Joe Adams by e-mail to jadams@becker-poliakoff.com. This column is not a substitute for consultation with legal counsel. Past editions of this column may be viewed at www.becker-poliakoff.com.