



RON ALVEY/DAYTON DAILY NEWS

THE SEVEN WOMEN named the Women of Influence are (seated, from left): Gail Littlejohn, Karen Levin, Susan Katz, Pat Meadows, Bobbie Myers, Ann Stevens and Penny Wolff. The event took place at the Dayton Convention Center.

YWCA honors influential area women

Short, sweet awards luncheon pays tribute to seven

By MEREDITH MOSS
mmoss@DaytonDailyNews.com

DAYTON — The YWCA deserves an award for its awards luncheon.

At Thursday's Women of Influence Recognition Luncheon, the organization managed to welcome and feed 1,000 guests, her-

ald honorees with suitable praise, allow time for acceptance thank-you's, and get everyone back to work. All in 90 minutes.

Instead of the usual lists of recited accomplishments, there were short video interviews in which recipients summed up their life philosophies.

Emcee Sharon Howard added levity by sharing "dirt" about each honoree's life and giving each a silly name. Acceptance speeches were short and inspirational.

Ellen and Jeff Ireland, presented with the YWCA Lifetime

SUNDAY IN LIFE

PROFILES OF THE HONOREES

Achievement Award, came up with a creative and effective way to use their allotted two minutes.

While Jeff Ireland gave the official acceptance speech, his wife softly read the names of dozens of organizations, family members and friends who have encouraged and supported the couple through the years.

The 2005 honorees are Susan Katz, community volunteer; Gail Littlejohn, president of Dayton Public school board and founder and president of Our Own Image; Bobbie Myers, community volunteer; Penny Wolff, Sebaly, Shillito & Dyer law firm; Karen Levin, community volunteer; Patricia Meadows, executive director of Dayton Region of the National Conference for Community and Justice; and Ann Stevens, public information manager for Montgomery County Children Services and a disc jockey for Clear Channel Radio-Dayton.

YWCA honorees have love of people, community in common

By MEREDITH MOSS
mmoss@DaytonDailyNews.com

DAYTON — When she heard her grandmother would be receiving a big award from the YWCA, young Alex wanted to know what the initials stood for.

"It's the Young Women's Christian Association," her grandfather explained.

Alex looked perplexed.

"I don't understand," she replied. "She's *not* young and she's *not* Christian."

The grandmother in question — Bobbie Myers — said that's exactly what made the award so meaningful.

"I am especially touched to be honored by an organization that doesn't practice age discrimination or religious bias," Myers, who is Jewish, told 1,000 luncheon patrons gathered at the Dayton Convention Center on Thursday, a crowd she labeled "a fund-raiser's dream."

"But just to set the record straight, when I started this volunteering journey, I *was* young!"

A lifetime of community caring characterized the lives of the seven recipients honored by the YWCA at the annual "Women of Influence Recognition Luncheon," the organization's largest fund-raiser. Those chosen have been positive influences on the lives of others, as part of their careers, as volunteers, as role models and mentors.

Master of ceremonies Sharon Howard warmed up the crowd with cute anecdotes about each win-



ELLEN AND JEFF IRELAND

ABOUT THE RECIPIENTS

► Susan Katz, community volunteer; Gail Littlejohn, president of Dayton Public Schools board and founder and president of Our Own Image; Bobbie Myers, community volunteer; Penny Wolff, Sebaly, Shillito & Dyer law firm; Karen Levin, community volunteer; Patricia Meadows, executive director of Dayton Region of the National Conference for Community and Justice; and Ann Stevens, public information manager for Montgomery County Children Services and a disc jockey for Clear Channel Radio-Dayton.

► A Lifetime Achievement award was also presented to Jeff and Ellen Ireland for their years of dedication to the YWCA.

ner and a silly name for each. A short video and live acceptance speech allowed each recipient to share her personal philosophy.

"This influence is filled with risks and responsibilities, especially when there is so much at stake — the lives of children, the quality of life for families and communities," said honoree Gail Littlejohn. "It is impossible to influence anyone or anything unless you are allowed to do so. It is a privilege and it is humbling."

Littlejohn said she believes that very average people can do extraordinary things if they are encouraged, nurtured, supported and given role models. "I believe that a few people can change the world, or at least a corner of it," she added.

Honoree Susan Katz said her Jewish faith has taught her that if you have an impact on one person or save one life, it is as if you had saved the world.

All of the honorees insisted they have received much more than they have given.

Myers listed some of her gifts: "Seeing infants pulled from the brink of death at Children's Medical Center; being hugged and thanked by a person battling for life with AIDS; touring a small village in Israel, where Russian immigrants begin a new life and are free from religious and political persecution; enjoying a rich and viable arts community in Dayton; and having the freedom to work within our political process."

Monies raised at the annual luncheon are returned to the community through youth services, shelters and housing, collaborations with other organizations and professional growth experiences for women.

Contact Meredith Moss at 225-2440.

'I believe that a few people can change the world, or at least a corner of it.'

GAIL LITTLEJOHN