

SVHC to honor Kendall, Pezzulich at fifth annual Harvest Ball

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BENNINGTON -- In September, Southwestern Vermont Health Care will honor two individuals, a physician and a community member, for their efforts to advance the health system's vision of healthier communities. The health system will recognize retired surgeon, Dr. Robert A. Pezzulich, with the 2014 Health Care Leadership Award and CEO and chairman of Mack Molding, Don Kendall, with the 2014 Distinguished Community Service Award.



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DON KENDALL (Supplied photo)

The health system will officially present the awards at the Fifth Annual Harvest Ball, a fundraising event organized by the Southwestern Vermont Health Care Foundation. This year's ball will be held at the 1768 Hubbell Homestead on Saturday, Sept. 6.

The Health Care Leadership award recognizes a physician who demonstrates excellence in medical practice and patient care and whose service is aimed at improving health care in SVHC's service area. The Distinguished Community Service Award honors a member of the community for their commitment, support, and service to SVHC's mission and vision.

"Dr. Pezzulich and Mr. Kendall are truly deserving of these honors," said Thomas Dee, the health system's president and CEO. "Both men chose to dedicate their lives to building a better community, and their generosity has positively touched many people in our community and beyond."

Pezzulich will be honored for his many years of work at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, both as a surgeon and as the chief of staff.

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After studying and training at the New York Presbyterian Hospital, in conjunction with attending Weill Cornell Medical College, he went on to become a surgeon in the United States Air Force. He was attracted to SVMC, then known as Putnam Memorial Hospital, by its great reputation, but after meeting the staff he knew it was where he needed to be. Pezzulich came to the hospital in 1973 and began a career that would last for 40 years.

In that time, Pezzulich led the way with new technology and surgical techniques, introducing both endoscopy and colonoscopy to SVMC.

The medical staff elected him chief of staff 22 years in a row. "It is one of my proudest achievements," Pezzulich said. "I believe it reflected the confidence that the medical staff had in me and that I was doing my job well."

At the age of 65, Pezzulich was named the lead investigator of a study on the effects of electronic healthcare records on patient safety.

Now retired, Pezzulich lives in Bennington, and stays busy by sitting on the board of the Battenkill Valley Health Center, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) in Arlington. He also serves as the chairman of the facility's building committee.



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ROBERT PEZZULICH (Supplied photo)

"Dr. Pezzulich was instrumental in making SVMC one of the most forward thinking, high-quality health systems in the country," said David Meiselman, chairman of the SVHC Board of Trustees. "From championing new minimally invasive surgical techniques to creating an entire department devoted to improving patient safety, Bob Pezzulich helped lead the way, and patients have him and his pioneering colleagues to thank for care that is safer than ever before."

Kendall will receive the distinguished community service award for his continued support for the greater Bennington community. He is CEO and chairman of the Mack Group, which includes Mack Molding, Mack Technologies and Mack Prototype.

The Kendall family has been involved in plastics for nearly 100 years, and Don Kendall assumed leadership of the company at age 26. Under his leadership, Mack has grown from a \$4 million dollar company to one with over \$300 million in annual sales.

Despite the size of the company, Mack has remained family-owned and operated, and Kendall has focused on the welfare of communities in which Mack operates and where its employees live.

He has supported projects ranging from Arlington Area Childcare to recently supporting the development of the Battenkill Valley Health Center.

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Kendall has generously supported SVHC as well, reinforcing his philanthropic philosophy of a deep commitment to education and healthcare, which he believes to be the heart of every community.

"Don Kendall understands that great communities and great people are behind every great organization," said David Newell, chairman of the SVHC Foundation Board. "As CEO and chairman of Mack Molding, he has committed himself to building both an outstanding business and a solid community. As a business leader, by building Mack Molding into a leading custom plastics molder and contract manufacturer, he has created economic opportunity for hundreds of Vermonters. As a community leader and philanthropist, he has dedicated himself to improving education and health care opportunities in the communities that members of the Mack family of employees call home. We are thrilled to be able to recognize his strength and dedication to creating vibrant, successful communities."

For the awards, SVHC sought nominations from the public, the physician community, health system employees, volunteers, and board members, many of whom will attend the award ceremony at the Fifth Annual Harvest Ball.

The ball will take place on Saturday, Sept. 6, at the 1768 Hubbell Homestead at Colgate Park.

All proceeds will benefit the health system.

For tickets or more information, contact the foundation office at 802-447-5017.

Southwestern Vermont Health Care is an integrated health system providing care for patients in Bennington and Windham Counties in Vermont, Rensselaer and Washington Counties in New York, and Berkshire County in Massachusetts.

SVHC includes SVMC, Vermont's first Magnet Hospital for Nursing Excellence, the Centers for Living & Rehabilitation, the SVHC Foundation, the Southwestern Vermont Regional Cancer Center, and the SVMC Northshire and Deerfield Valley Campuses.

To learn more about SVHC, visit svhealthcare.org (<http://svhealthcare.org>) or visit our Facebook page.

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