

Gregory Stockard Distinguished Service Award

Michel and Donna Deetz, Recipients

Michel and Donna Deetz are transplants to Jefferson City but not to the state of Missouri. Donna grew up in the Florissant area (St. Louis County) and Mike attended high school in Springfield. After moving all over the country for various jobs, they made a conscious decision to make Jefferson City their home nearly twenty years ago. Mike said "We like the community. It has the feel of a small town but with the ideas and activities of a larger city."

Both have retired from the corporate world to pursue their love of history and community. They purchased their first building in the 600 block of East High, the old Beck & Evers Appliance store. This project and their interest in the history and development of the Downtown and Eastside areas got them involved in the various business and community associations. Donna currently serves as the President of Downtown Jefferson City, is on the Board of the Eastside Association, Historic City of Jefferson and the Jefferson City Area Chamber of Commerce and has been the recipient of various awards from Zonta of Jefferson City and the Chamber of Commerce.

"If you want to see things develop and get better, you can't just sit around and talk about it." Donna commented. "You have to give something of yourself to the effort. Your buy-in and your input can make a difference."



This is certainly true of the impact that Mike and Donna have made on the 700 block of East High. Having purchased the old Fuchs Veterinary Hospital and surrounding property, the Deetz have rehabbed the original Heinrich Funeral Home into the High Street Event and Meeting Center, in conjunction with their business partner on that property, Laurelanne Bellezzo. They have also redeveloped the little house next door that is now occupied by Dahlmeyer Law offices. They are in the midst of taking the small red brick house in the same block and rehabbing it as a residence for themselves and Donna's parents.

Keeping up the historical aspects of Jefferson City also led them to found The Trolley Company. A charter transportation company, the trolleys are used for weddings, holiday light tours, winery tour trips, historical tours of the community, and even as shuttles for the Cole County Courts and the annual Salute to America. They started the company just over a year ago with one trolley and are now the proud owners of four trolleys including one that was used by former President Bill Clinton when he was campaigning for President in Arkansas.

Their latest project is the redevelopment of the old Fairview Hotel at the corner of East High and Ash Street. They are working with two local businesspersons to put in a new Tropical Drinkery and to expand Prison Brews' Banquet Center—both of which should be opening in June or July. The nine upstairs apartments will be converted into six high-end apartments with those apartments scheduled for availability next spring.

According to Donna, "Growing up in St. Louis and being proud of the history of that area of Missouri, made us all the more excited to work on our little piece of history." The Deetz take homes and buildings from the mid 1800s to the early 1900s and make them live again, creating a living history."