

AltDaily

Meredith and Brother Rutter Chosen for Downtowner of the Year Award

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Downtown Norfolk Council (DNC) will hold its Annual Meeting on June 15 at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott. The main activity is to honor Downtowners selected by the DNC Board of Directors. This year's honorees include Mayor Paul Fraim with a Lifetime Achievement Award and Meredith and Brother Rutter with the Peter G. Decker Jr. Downtowner of the Year Award.



The Rutters.

This is only the third Lifetime Achievement Award to be bestowed by the Downtown Norfolk Council. This year's recipient, Mayor Paul Fraim, has served as the Mayor of Norfolk for 22 years and has been instrumental in the growth and development in Downtown.

Fraim began a private law practice in May 1977 and is president of Fraim and Fiorella, PC. He is chairman of the Slover Library Foundation Board and serves on Hampton Roads Mayors and Chairs Caucus, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization, Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission, Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance and Greater Norfolk Corporation.

He is the former chair of the USS *Wisconsin* Foundation and former member of the National Maritime Center Board of Directors. Mayor Fraim has worked tirelessly on behalf of Downtown to make it the regional commercial and cultural center of the region.



“We are so proud to recognize Mayor Fraim for his vision and leadership in Norfolk over these decades not only as Mayor but also as a member of Council,” said Mary Miller, president and CEO of Downtown Norfolk Council. “Downtown’s renaissance—from the \$300 million MacArthur Center to the \$65 million Slover Library—was accomplished on his watch. We would not be enjoying the success and continued growth that Downtown is experiencing now without his encouragement and support.”

Other Lifetime Achievement Award recipients included local attorney and philanthropist, Peter G. Decker, Jr., and Frank Batten, Sr., founder of Landmark Communications and co-founder of the Weather Channel.

The Peter G. Decker, Jr. Downtowner of the Year Award is given to an individual or individuals who have made a substantial contribution to Downtown Norfolk through economic and cultural development. Husband and wife Brother and Meredith Rutter have been an integral part of the birth and success of the NEON (New Energy of Norfolk) District. They renovated the historic 1917 Texaco building in the District and opened Work | Release, an art exhibition and event space. They also founded NEAR (New Energy Artist Residency), an artist residency program in partnership with the Chrysler Museum of Art and the Glass Wheel Studio.

In addition, the Rutters have a free short-term apartment loan program within the Texaco building for nonprofit art organizations for visiting artists or speakers. Brother serves on the Board of Trustees of the Chrysler Museum of Art and chairs the exhibition committee. Meredith and Brother founded the Rutter Family Art Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing contemporary art to the widest possible audience in Hampton Roads. They have funded five art exhibitions with plans for five more in 2016.

The Rutters also founded a Curatorial Fellowship that is awarded yearly to a college or graduate student pursuing curatorial studies. The current recipient has completed an internship at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and will curate, install and oversee an art exhibition at Work | Release this summer.

The Annual Meeting draws hundreds of Downtown supporters. The event begins at 11:15 for registration and exhibits and 12:15 for the luncheon and program. For ticket information, please contact Noel Gramlich at [757-623-1757](tel:757-623-1757).