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Irving Sherman is named Oakley's top citizen

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Though the name "Irving Sherman" might not be as recognizable as some of the past Oakley Citizens of the Year, those who nominated the quiet man say the honor is a long time coming.

Sherman is a lifelong resident of Oakley and a volunteer firefighter in the city who still works with the East Contra Costa Fire District.

"Irv would take the shirt off his back for anyone if it would help," said 2010 Oakley Citizen of the Year Jane Crockett. Crockett and the nonprofit she works with, the Degree of Pocahontas of Oakley, nominated Sherman.

Sherman was born in San Francisco in 1940 and immediately brought back to the ranch he still lives on today in Oakley. On April 4, 1964, Sherman signed on to become a volunteer firefighter in Oakley.

"At the time, we were really volunteers. It wasn't until about 15 years ago that the volunteers started getting paid for each fire they went out to," he said.

Crockett's husband, Ken, another lifelong Oakley resident, remembers that it was Sherman who made sure that water could reach the rural area in case of fire.

"Irv made a special adapter to connect to the farmers' irrigation system so that there was water," Ken Crockett said. "All the farmers had one. There were no fire hydrants in the rural areas in those days."

When the Pocahontas group prepared the nomination for Sherman, they contacted Joe and Manuel Tovar, once top volunteer firefighters in Oakley, and used quotes from both.

"Joe and Manuel had such great things to say about Irv and his time working with them," Jane Crockett said.

Also getting awards during the Oakley Citizen of the Year dinner will be Businessperson of the Year Mike Painter of Oakley Chiropractic; Adult Volunteer of the Year Boy Scout leader Jeff Lim; Youth Volunteer of the Year Carlos Green; Police Officer of the Year Lance Morrison; and a special President's Choice Recognition award to the Oakley Youth Advisory Commission.

Sherman and the others will be honored at the Oakley Chamber's Citizen of the Year dinner May 20 at the Brownstone Gardens. For tickets, call the chamber at 925-625-1035.



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