

Center City Vision Awards Celebrate the Best of Charlotte

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Each year, Charlotte Center City Partners celebrates and recognizes the contributions of individuals, businesses and organizations that have made Center City Charlotte a better and more vibrant place with our annual Vision Awards event. As usual, the award winners this year were extraordinary – each organization and individual has played an integral role in creating the City we all know and love today.

Architect and Charlotte native David Furman was recognized with the 2015 Vision Award, which is given each year to a community leader without whom our City would not be the same. Furman is a housing specialist with over 35 years experience designing and developing thousands of units, in projects of all scales throughout Charlotte and the eastern part of the U.S.

Furman created development company Centro Cityworks to focus on urban, affordable, unique housing projects. Between 2000 and 2008, Centro Cityworks created 20 projects, valued at over \$250 million, 15 of which are in Uptown Charlotte including two towers. He helped establish and make First Ward the great Uptown neighborhood it is today,

introduced the first high rise living in Uptown with the Courtside project, and is now branching into new office concepts.

Three organizations received Special Achievement awards this year: BB&T Ballpark, Charlotte Ballet and Crisis Assistance Ministry. These awards recognize an organization, individual or business that has had a major impact on Center City's ongoing transformation. BB&T Ballpark was chosen for the significant teamwork, fortitude, patience and vision it took to bring this project to life, in recognition of those who played a pivotal role in the land swap and creation of the ballpark.

Charlotte Ballet was recognized for being a premier arts organization that raises the profile of Charlotte, and for bringing an international spotlight through innovative choreography, creative programming and talented artists.

Crisis Assistance Ministry was awarded for decades of dedicated service to fragile families in the Charlotte community and valued leadership on preventing homelessness and preserving dignity for Charlotte-Mecklenburg's working poor. Each of

these organizations and the people behind them has been invaluable to our City.

Phat Burrito was our 2015 Settlers Award recipient, which is given to a Center City business, institution or retailer who has been a key contributor to Center City's quality of life. Owner Steven Justice accepted the award on behalf of Phat Burrito, a pioneering South End business that has served Charlotteans and welcomed visitors with great food, colorful character and warm hospitality for more than 17 years. If you haven't been lately, it's worth a stop!

At the core of what we do at Charlotte Center City Partners, we believe that a great city and region are built upon the foundation of a vibrant downtown. The energy of Charlotte Center City is sparked by our connections and shared experiences – many of which are made greater by the work of this year's Vision Award winners. There is nothing like that BB&T Ballpark skyline view, right? This year's winners remind us that together, we are all part of something greater. Please join me in celebrating and honoring these great institutions. *