

# Latest Spirit of Union recipients announced!

Union, Ohio – Aug. 20, 2019 – **Linda and Michael Hardman** are the recipients of the **2019 Spirit of Union Award**.



The Hardmans had lived all over the United States and even abroad when Michael was in the Air Force, but when it was time to retire from active duty, their thoughts for where to settle down turned to home – Ohio.

Linda had grown up in Greenville and Michael in Bellefontaine – they found their perfect slice of heaven kind of in between, in the City of Union. They’ve made their home here since 2010 at 109 Irongate Drive in Union’s Irongate Estates neighborhood. Here, they’ve raised two sons and planted deep roots.

Their gifted green thumb for gardening has earned them this year’s Spirit of Union Award.

“Living in Union is great – it’s such a beautiful community and everyone is so nice,” Linda says. “The Northmont school system is wonderful. And even though we feel like we’re out in the country, it’s just a hop, skip and a jump to shopping and restaurants. Life here is nice and easy.”

The Hardmans’ brick-and-sided tri-level home, built in 1997, offers curb appeal from the get-go. The front yard boasts a sweet gum tree and a royal king maple, a lush lawn and a bevy of flower beds. Linda jokes that one of the flower beds is shaped like the famed Pocono race track in Pennsylvania.

“We actually refer to that flower bed as “The Pocono’ – we crack up laughing about that,” she says.

The pride and joy of her front yard is an arbor with a swinging seat. A beautiful wisteria vine climbs over the arbor, providing shade.

There’s also a flower bed anchoring the mailbox near the street.

Hostas, day lilies, irises, climbing clematis and peonies are just some of the flowers one finds throughout the yard in color schemes of purple, pink and white – with bits of red and yellow for “pop.”

Snowball bushes, a lace elderberry bush, a magnolia and two lilac trees also adorn the property.

The Hardmans spend many an evening on their long front porch, which features seating and numerous potted plants and hanging baskets.

“I have many house plants all over the porch – they’re happy there,” Linda says.

But even more than relaxing on the front porch, the Hardmans often are out back where they enjoy a tiered deck with a pergola that covers an outdoor dining area and another section for sunning.

A walkway from the deck lined with calla lilies leads to a hot tub. The Hardmans also added a fire pit with gorgeous stone work and landscaping that includes hostas and ferns.

An arbor with a climbing clematis, a storage shed and a play area are also part of the backyard. Rose of Sharon bushes, hibiscus and hydrangea plants, a Bradford pear tree and crab apple trees provide color and shade.

Linda learned to love gardening from her mother-in-law and grandmother-in-law.

“During the summertime, gardening is what I’m doing,” she says. “The only thing I don’t do is weed whack. I will tear down a building with a weed eater. It takes a certain finesse, and my husband Mike handles that!”

Linda and Mike are very involved in the Irongate Estates homeowners association. Linda says it’s been great for getting to know neighbors.

Linda added that she has two large hibiscus plants in pots, which, come the end of this season, she plans to give away as they have become too big to move into the house for the winter.

“If anyone wants them, let me know!” she said.

The Park Board established the Spirit of Union Award in 1997 to encourage exterior enhancements of residential and business properties. More information about the City’s Spirit of Union Award can be found on the City’s website at [www.unionoh.org](http://www.unionoh.org).

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