



Class of 2023 Inductee Biography Jeff Owyong

SUMMARY:

Professional Contributions and Recognitions in the Workplace & Industry:

- Started Milner Owyong Insurance Group, LLC with partners in 1999
- First NaturalState Bank co-owner
- 2010-2011 Big I President
- 2013 Allan Kennedy Memorial Award
- Big I governmental affairs committee, current

Community Service & Recognitions:

- Mayor of McGehee, Arkansas – 2015 to present
- Chairman of McGehee “Owlfest” for the past 15 years
- Director of McGehee Bank
- McGehee Industrial Foundation board member
- UAM College of Technology Advisory board Chairman in McGehee
- UAM Foundation Fund Board member
- President of the McGehee School District board of directors
- First United Methodist Church of McGehee Chairman of the Trustees
- 2004-2005 President of the McGehee Chamber
- 2004 & 2009 McGehee Chamber of Commerce Man of the Year
- 2007 he was named the McGehee Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year
- 2008-2013 UAM Board of Visitors
- 2011 Community Service Award sponsored by KARK, Dept of Human Services, Duncan Law Firm and the Office of the Governor

FULL BIOGRAPHY:

Jeff Owyong graduated from Montrose Academy in 1978 and the University of Arkansas at Monticello in 1982 with a degree in Psychology and lettered in football and tennis while at UAM. From 1983-1987 Jeff coached football and basketball at his alma mater Montrose Academy. In 1987, Southeast Insurance owner, John Clower, reached out to Jeff about joining him and Randy Allison to work with them at this local independent insurance agency. During that time, he worked on the commercial lines and life and health side of business from 1987 through 1998. Blue Cross Blue Shield contacted Jeff to be their small group marketing representative for Southeast Arkansas in 1998, after a brief stint with the corporate world he decided to come back to the independent side of insurance to start his own agency from scratch with partners Mack Milner and First NaturalState Bank in 1999 to form Milner Owyong Insurance Group, LLC. Just this year, Jeff bought our First NaturalState Bank in May and now owns 2/3 of the agency.

During his time in the insurance industry, Jeff served as the Big I President (2010-2011), was selected for the Allan Kennedy Memorial Award in 2013, obtained his CIC designation in 1993 and currently sits on the Big I governmental affairs committee.

After the urging of several business leaders in McGehee along with the former and late Mayor Jack May, Jeff decided to run for mayor in 2015 which he is in his 3rd term of office. His dedication to parks and recreation has

led to upgrading the parks around town, including the baseball & softball complex. He is also in the process of finishing up a first class "pocket park" downtown on Main Street made possible by donations from local individuals and businesses.

Jeff is very active in McGehee with his community service. His passion to give back shows as he sits on many boards in town and outside of McGehee. Jeff was President of the McGehee Chamber in 2004 & 2005. He was selected twice for McGehee Chamber of Commerce Man of the Year in 2004 & 2009, and in 2007 he was named the Chambers Volunteer of the Year. He also was selected as the 2011 Community Service Award sponsored by KARK, Dept of Human Service, Duncan Law Firm and the Office of the Governor. McGehee has an annual festival in the fall each year called "Owlfest" since 2007 which he has been chairman of for the last 15 years. Jeff is also a director of McGehee Bank along with sitting on the McGehee Industrial Foundation board which helps bring and promote economic development to McGehee.

Education has always been in his heart as he was appointed to the UAM Board of Visitors from 2008-2013, currently is Chairman of the UAM College of Technology Advisory board in McGehee and a UAM Foundation Fund Board Member. He is also the President of the McGehee School District board of directors.

In 2013, Jeff helped bring tourism and awareness to the community by opening up the WWII Japanese American Internment Museum with the help and support of the McGehee Industrial Foundation. He wanted to educate and share with people about this unfortunate part of American History. This past May 4, 2023, they held the 10 year reunion for the museum with keynote speaker George Takei in attendance.

Jeff and his wife Sallie, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary May 1, 2023. They have 3 children and 2 grandchildren: Kent (36), Chase (35) and his wife Paisley, their son Ellis (9), daughter Charlotte (6) and Ross (29). They are long time members of the First United Methodist Church of McGehee where he serves as Chairman of the Trustees.