

USHA 'stalwart' Leidich gains national honor

Winners of the Carl Porter Award are recognized for outstanding service to the USHA on a national level.

It's hard to imagine anyone more qualified than Ray Leidich, who was presented with the award during the banquet at the Semper Fi Tournament over Memorial Day weekend in San Diego.

Leidich has been instrumental in the success of the Semper Fi and many other events. He has served on the USHA board of directors and been involved in many aspects of the game on the national stage.

USHA executive director Vern Roberts presented the award to Leidich. Porter himself had hoped to attend the awards ceremony but was laid low by illness. He sent this message to Leidich:

"I'm disappointed to miss personally presenting you with the Carl Porter Award for your many years of tremendous contributions to The Perfect Game."

"You've been a stalwart of our USHA board of directors, one of the hardest-working voices of wisdom and reason we've ever had, and you have championed the development of handball from one coast to the other. I am flattered and honored to have my name associated with yours."

In addition to directing many state and local tournaments over his 50-year handball career, any doubt as to Leidich's qualifications was dismissed by USHA president Mike Steele, who provided this list of Lei-



The Leidichs — Nancy and Ray — beam as they show off his plaque for winning the 2010 Carl Porter Award.

■ For a report on the Semper Fi Tournament, see Pages 45-46

dich's accomplishments:

- USHA board member from 2003-09.
- USHA investments adviser.
- USHA board committee chair.
- Founder, Semper Fi Handball Foundation.
- Founder, Semper Fi Handball Tournament.
- Founder, Corvallis Open.
- Tournament director, 2006 National Masters Doubles, Corvallis, Ore.
- Author, "A Handbook for Tournament Directors."

Carl Porter Award recipients

- 2006: USHA sports medicine team: Dr. John Aronen, Ray Chronister and Kevin Regan
- 2008: Mike Meltzer
- 2009: Keith Thode and Dan Flickstein
- 2010: Ray Leidich

- Participant in and donor to "Share the Passion" campaign.
- Virginia state chair, 1980s.
- Oregon state chair, 1990s.
- Coach, Oregon State Handball Club.
- Interim coach, Pacific University Handball Club, 1992.
- Strong advocate of promoting handball as cross-training sport.
- Great promoter of handball wherever he has been, from Japan to the South Pacific to the Pentagon.
- Great skills in advancing USHA investment portfolio.
- Model USHA board member.
- Strong proponent of accountability, job descriptions and innovative thinking.
- Promoter of handball connections to Marine Corps, service academies and high school NROTC.

The Carl Porter Award was established in 2005. It is named after Porter, the USHA's second president, who is considered the savior and architect of the modern USHA.

Vargas' service saluted

As part of the festivities at the Semper Fi, Jay Vargas was recognized as a recipient of the Medal of Honor.

The commendation cites Vargas, then a Marine captain in 1968, for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty" during a conflict in Dai Do, Vietnam.

Vargas was wounded three times over a three-day battle. He was given the medal for "expert leadership (as) he maneuvered his Marines across 700 meters of open rice paddy while under intense enemy mortar, rocket and artillery fire."

The commendation says "he disregarded his excruciating pain, crossed the fire-swept area and carried his (wounded) commander to a covered position, then resumed supervising and encouraging his men while simultaneously assisting in organizing the battalion's perimeter defense. His gallant actions uphold the highest traditions of the Marine Corps."



Medal of Honor recipient Jay Vargas with Alvis Grant and Ray Leidich as they display Grant's portrait of Vargas during the Semper Fi banquet.