

REALTOR OF THE YEAR

2008

At this special time each year, we like to take a moment to recognize one member of our Association who has demonstrated outstanding support for our organization as well as for the local community. The individual who receives this acknowledgment “enhances the image of our profession by going beyond the call of duty unselfishly giving his time to the community, his Association and his profession.” We are gathered here today to honor a fellow REALTOR® who has gone beyond the call of duty time and again. This is the highest award that can be presented to any REALTOR®.

Some of you may remember this refrain from an old TV theme song, “Born on a mountaintop in Tennessee, killed him a bar when he was only three”. That’s a hero turned legend from another time. Today, we have in our midst our own hero that’s turned legend in his own time and that legend is being honored as REALTOR® OF THE YEAR.

Charlie Brindel was born on May 8th, 1929 in Hickory, NC into a typical middle class family. The depression set in and at the tender young age of four years , Charlie saw his father ride off to work with a friend never to return, leaving his mother, uneducated and unskilled, to take care of her four year son and his 7 month old sister, Joanne. To say times were hard is an understatement, for Charlie and his family endured many hardships even living in a tent next to a railroad for 9 months. But even at an early age, Charlie recognized that hard work and devotion to duty ultimately paid huge dividends. At the age of 14, he became a nighttime manager of the kitchen in a large hotel where he was allowed to live in a converted storage room. When Charlie turned 16, he learned that the Army would send his mother and sister a check for \$37.00 per month out of his \$50.00 monthly salary if he joined. However, the minimum age to join was 17. Charlie convinced a local wino to forge his mother’s signature on his admission papers and 3 months later, Charlie was in Germany escorting POW’S to the train station so they could return home. Thus at the ripe old age of 16, Charlie saw action in the first of three wars for his country.

For the next 32 years, Charlie served his country well rising to the rank of colonel at his retirement. During his military career, Charlie excelled in the US Army Infantry. His notable achievements include: a master parachutist, ranger, member of the Army Hall of Fame, recipient the Legion of Valor and the Distinguished Service Cross. The Distinguished Service Cross is second only to the Medal of Honor in prestige and the actions that brought about this award bear repeating. The following is an excerpt from a recent published article titled, Charlie Brindel, A Leader by Example.

“The true test of any leader is how well he responds in a moment of crisis. Charlie’s test came during the Viet Cong’s infamous Tet Offensive, January 31st, 1968 where his acts of uncommon valor epitomized leadership by example. When the offensive started, Charlie was supervising the construction of a grade school in a small town outside of Saigon. He immediately summoned his major, captain and radio operator, commandeered a jeep and headed back to company headquarters located in the town of Go Vap. Along the way, they encountered an army transport truck carrying 25 Military Policemen under ambush by the Viet Cong. A rocket had smashed into the grill of the truck, disabling the truck killing the driver and passenger. Another rocket had been fired into the rear of the disabled vehicle instantly killing 17 of the helpless soldiers. Hearing the moans of the remaining wounded MPs, without hesitation, Charlie and his men rushed into the battle. Under heavy small arms fire, these four brave men successfully carried the 6 wounded men to safety. During the rescue, a rocket was fired from the Viet Cong side striking his major on his upper left torso killing him instantly. His sergeant was also injured and had to be carried to safety as well. Charlie then had the presence to order his radioman to send a call out for air support. In all the confusion, one armed helicopter was found and Charlie ordered the pilot to fire all he had into the enemy’s position pinpointed by a yellow smoke bomb that Charlie had flung into the area. The helicopter fired all its rockets and machine fire into the VC location; then Charlie and a small army of men he hastily assembled took over. After it was all over, 42 Viet Cong soldiers were dead and 6 captured. The next day, Charlie returned to the battle scene to recover his major’s body. Fearing that the Viet Cong may have booby-trapped the body, Charlie carefully draped his body over the remaining part of the mutilated torso and rolled the major over. Luckily, there was no explosion and the major’s body was retrieved. During the interview for this article with Charlie, he was asked why he had risked his life to return to the scene. With tears in his eyes and in a choked voice he whispered, “We never leave one of ours behind and I

wanted his family to be able to give my major the proper burial he deserved.”

In August of 1948, Charlie experienced an event that forever changed his life. While visiting his family back in Hickory, Charlie walked out back to talk with neighbors that were picking figs. Under this fabled fig tree, Charlie met a young Irene Travis and three weeks later on September 1st, 1948, the smitten couple became husband and wife. They forged a relationship that to this date, 60 years later, is still going strong, and along the way, they raised three beautiful and successful children, Debbie, Butch and Jocelyn.

Charlie Brindel has served the real estate community for over 30 years. When Charlie retired from the Army as a Colonel in 1977, he was ready to seek out a new challenge and real estate met this challenge. He has dedicated his life to achieving the Coastal Carolinas Association of REALTORS® mission statement:

The Coastal Carolinas Association of REALTORS® mission is to provide its members with programs and services which:

- enhance the member's ability to successfully conduct business in a professional manner
- promote cooperation among its members
- advocate the public's right to use and transfer real property
- support a spirit of community service

He strongly believes in helping others and has done this in supporting all Association activities. Charlie has excelled in real estate and achieved numerous designations. He was selected as REALTOR® of the Year in 1980 in Fayetteville, North Carolina due to his implementation of 36 educational programs in one year. He established Champion Real Estate School for pre-licensing in Cumberland County, North Carolina, and personally holds a Broker license and the GRI designation. Charlie holds the distinguished designations of CAE and RCE as an Association Executive.

Charlie oversees all Association committees including Awards, Bylaws, Education, Finance & Budget, Grievance, Hospitality, Community Service, Leadership, Legislative, Membership, Multiple Listing Service, Nominating, Officers & Directors, Professional Standards, Public Relations,

REALTOR® Political Action Committee, Scholarship and the Coastal Real Estate Weekly.

For over 30 years, Charlie has implemented new programs at the beach such as the Leadership Program to help Realtors know and understand the real estate community. He has devoted his time and support to the REALTOR® Political Action Committee. He has expanded the Association's coverage to all of Horry and Georgetown Counties and parts of Brunswick County, NC. And this January, he will oversee the successful consolidation of the Grand Strand Board of Realtors® into CCAR. He has helped in making the Association what is today with his leadership, fiscal responsibility and dedication to duty. Charlie's efforts were rightfully rewarded when in 2003 our association chose to name its new building the Charlie Brindel Building.

Charlie supports many charities including the Cancer Relay for Life, American Heart Association, Camp Happy Days (Camp for children with cancer), Citizens Against Spousal Abuse (CASA), Mark Sloan Golf Tournament (raise money for cancer research), Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, Humane Society, American Business Women, and several church organizations including Promise Land (drug rehab facility). What you won't read or hear anything about are the many times Charlie has personally helped individuals in need of financial assistance. Charlie lent people money to get them through difficult times, and he is constantly performing small acts of kindness like slipping a \$100 bill to a 72 year old widow of a deceased veteran whose benefits have run out or adding an additional \$20 tip to help a young wife whose husband is deployed in Iraq. Such acts of unselfish kindness are the stuff of which legends are made.

I suppose that if you take the best attributes of all the past REALTOR® OF THE YEAR recipients and put them together, you would come up with the consummate realtor. Our hero turned legend in his own time is without question the consummate realtor. Please congratulate this exceptional REALTOR®, Charlie Brindel, for his outstanding dedication and service as we present him with 2008's **REALTOR® OF THE YEAR AWARD**.