AND THE RETAILER OF THE YEAR IS...
THE CORNER POST
ROTYS ARE OVER AND THE WINNERS ANNOUNCED!
BY RAY MATTES, PRESIDENT/CEO, RETAIL ALLIANCE

During this year’s Raising Your Glass event, emceed by WVEC’s Vanessa Coria, we set a new record with nominees and attendees; 256 attendees joined together to celebrate this year’s winners!

I’m proud of all our retail members who participated and supported the nominees. The finalists were top notch and the judges had their work cut out for them. It was clear to me that every one of our finalists qualified for the distinction of being 2014’s “Retailer of the Year”.

Those that were recognized as finalists; Wild Birds Unlimited of Yorktown, BedCrafters by Michelle, Mannino’s and Taylor’s Do It Center made the job of choosing an overall winner that much tougher. Then to cap off the evening we raised our glasses to Serendip, a very deserving retailer who won the distinction of being this year’s overall ROTY Winner!

Let’s not forget our Associate Members of the Year recipients, Wall Einhorn and Chernitzer and CLT Accounting, whose support and ambassadorship throughout the year has helped promote Retail Alliance as the preferred association representing retailers throughout Hampton Roads.

We recognized our second ever, “Lifetime Achievement Award” recipient; Dan Ryan of Dan Ryan’s for Men. Dan certainly demonstrates the staying power as well as the fundamentals necessary to operate a successful retail operation. I believe I can speak on behalf of all retailers when I say, congratulations Dan for an award well deserved through hard work and years of perseverance!

We were entertained by the Pusher’s, a funny group of actors who had us all laughing during their skits on customer service, regionalism and the benefits of buying local. They certainly have big things on the horizon with their new comedy theater opening in the Arts District in Norfolk and we are excited to call them neighbors and friends.

On behalf of the staff, I would like to extend our deep appreciation for all the hard work and dedication that Brenda Tusing of the Royal Chocolate, this year’s Membership Committee Chairman contributed to the event. Brenda and her fellow committee members worked tirelessly while giving up many hours of their time to make this year’s event first class.

Finally, to the staff of Retail Alliance, Kristin Lindsey and the folks behind the scene that did another amazing job of pulling off a spectacular event! Of course without our sponsors, this event would not have been a reality. A big shout out to; MacArthur Center, Sky4TV, The Tide 102.1, Decorum Furniture, WWIP89.1, Wilcox & Savage Law Firm, Norfolk Economic Development, Philip Michael Fashion for Men, Willis Wayside, Garden Gazebo, Cavanaugh Nelson, Quirks of Art, Bank @tlantec, Jake’s Place, Shop Talk, Suburban Asset Management, The Royal Chocolate, Way Back Yonder Antiques, and Southern Bank.

The event itself was a lot of good fun, camaraderie and a strong sense of belonging. I can honestly say without a doubt that this year’s finalist and winners are retailers that are staying true to their dreams and have a sincere passion for what they do. Congratulations to all our members for a job well done; happy retailing as you move forward in this proud profession!
AND THE OVERALL WINNER IS...

**SERENDIP**

AND THE OTHER TOP FINALISTS ARE...

**WILDBIRDS UNLIMITED OF YORKTOWN**

**BEDCRAFTERS BY MICHELLE**

**MANNINO’S ITALIAN BISTRO**

**TAYLOR’S DO-IT CENTER**
In 2012, Retail Alliance introduced the Associate Award at the Retailer of the Year ceremony.

This award recognizes an associate member who has shown devotion, support and commitment to the organization and to the overall well-being of our retail members.

A large pool of nominated associate members was narrowed down to three finalists on the Southside and three on the Peninsula.

Choosing between such wonderful supporters was difficult. Two members from amongst these worthy contenders were recognized at the ROTYs; one from the Southside and one from the Peninsula.

The finalists were:

**Peninsula:**
- CLT Accounting
- First Command Financial Planning
- Larry Arntz

**Southside:**
- Hapax
- Home Video Studio
- Wall Einhorn and Chernitzer

Congratulations to our winners:

Peninsula Associate Winner – CLT Accounting
Southside Associate Winner – Wall Einhorn and Chernitzer

Thank you to all our associates. Your support and advice is appreciated.

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL 50 RETAILER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

(Listed in Alphabetical Order, Top 15 in Bold and Italics)

AOC Salon
Apricot Lane
Array 700
Artisans Bakery & Café
Bead Retreat Boutique
BedCrafters by Michelle
Ben & Jerry’s/Green Mountain Coffee Café
Big Bob’s Flooring
Bō Essentials
CakeAlicious
CarLotz, Inc.
Cartridge Man
Circa 1918
Colley Avenue Copies & Graphics, Inc
Countryside Gardens
Decorum Furniture
Ebony Arts & Gifts
Esprit Decor Home Furnishings
Evangeline’s Closet
Gloucester Toyota
Goodman & Sons Jewelers
Groomingdale’s
Hilton Village Goldsmith
Hope House Foundation Thrift Shop
Jake’s Place Barbering Lounge And Spa
Jamestown Feed & Seed
Jody’s Popcorn
Jungle Golf of Virginia Beach, Inc
Long Jewelers
Madison Jewelers
Mannino’s Italian Bistro
MOMO’s Café
Nancy’s Calico Patch
No Frill Grill
Once Upon A Child
Panavoir
Philip Michael Fashion for Men
Quirks of Art
Serendip
Starving Artist Studio
Sunrise Pizzeria Family Restaurant
Taste of Europe, Inc
Taylor’s Do It Center
The Christmas Store
The Nautical Dog
The Peanut Shop of Williamsburg
Walk This Way
Way Back Yonder Antiques
Welton’s Seafood Market
Wild Birds Unlimited of Yorktown
Dan Ryan Sr. started working at Bry’s - his first department store job - in Memphis, Tenn., at age 16. When his family moved to Norfolk in 1960, he went on to work for The Hub, a men’s clothing store in Wards Corner and then Edgerton & Lee, where he became the district manager and clothing buyer. He even tried selling vacuum cleaners for a short time before returning to men’s fashion and opening Dan Ryan’s For Men in 1976.

“It took me four and a half years to make it a reality,” he said about his dream of opening his own store. “Five businessmen lent me some money and my wife, Nancy, and I co-signed notes with everybody. As I recall it took about 12 to 18 months to be profitable because I paid back all of my investors in the first 24 months.”

On May 13, the Hilltop store in Virginia Beach celebrated 38 years in business and last week, Retail Alliance awarded Ryan with the 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award at its Retailer of the Year event. The store in the Hilltop North Shopping Center on Laskin Road specializes in custom men’s clothing, ready-made garments, tuxedo rentals, alterations and accessories. Dan Ryan’s For Men also has an outside salesman – Ryan’s son, Dan Ryan Jr., who makes office calls and deliveries.

“We save clients a tremendous amount of time,” Ryan said. “It’s a real value to them because they don’t have to take the hour to two hours out of their day to go shopping.”

Though ties have narrowed an inch or two over the years, Ryan said men’s fashion is history repeating itself in a slightly different design. When he first started working in the industry, Ryan said men’s fashion was moving away from pleats, and the flat front pants most men wear today were just coming into style.

“When we first opened, the store was half this size and we didn’t stock any suits or sport coats at that time,” he said. “It was more about sportswear and then in our second season we put in suits and sport coats, but the business has evolved. Not as many men are wearing coats and ties every day.”

DAN RYAN RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

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