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resident receiving statewide recognition for his dedicated service.

Jul. 16, 2014

Managing to combine a life of service and a life of business resulted in a Natchez resident receiving statewide recognition for his dedicated service.

Bennett “Benny” Jeansonne, a partner at accounting and advising firm Silas Simmons, was presented with the Certified Public Accountant Public Service Award June 28 by the Mississippi Society of Certified Public Accountants. The MSCPA Public Service Award is given to one of the 2,600 Mississippian public accountants each year.

Jeansonne said he started volunteering when he came to Natchez so he could build a network within the community.

“I knew for business I needed to get out and meeting some folks,” Jeansonne said. “And it just sort of evolved from that.”

The MSCPA Public Service Award is given to one certified public accountant a year that has put his time toward community involvement and development. Jeansonne first started volunteering with the Kiwanis Club in the late 1980s. Today, he is involved with nearly a dozen non-profit organizations.

“The community of Natchez has been very good to the Jeansonne family,” Benny said. “I'm just paying them back.”

Jeansonne is involved in several economic development organizations, serving as a board member for Natchez Inc. and chairman for Natchez Now.

“He has been a tremendous and valuable member of the Natchez Inc. board,” Natchez

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Jeansonne's work as a CPA involves acting as a third party to advise businesses on their finances.

“Benny is very driven,” said Janis Holder, firm administrator at Silas Simmons.

“When he volunteers to a job or is selected for a job, he gives it 150 percent. He treats everyone at the same level.”

Jeansonne joined Silas Simmons in November 1987 and became a partner in 1994. Silas Simmons has produced two CPAs who have won the Public Service Award. Bill Mosby Jr. was the first Silas Simmons partner to be honored in 2000.

Holder said Jeansonne was proactive when he first joined the firm, and he never slowed down.

“He has a 'lead by example' demeanor about him,” Holder said. “He won't ask you to work any more hours or any harder than he is willing to work.”

Holder said Jeansonne is willing to work as many hours as necessary to get the job done, and he still holds the people working for him to the same standards.

Chuck Caldwell, the managing partner at Silas Simmons, said Jeansonne comes into work at 3 a.m. during the office's busiest times.

“If I don't have a passion for what it is, I won't be a good member,” Jeansonne said. “I want to be a good member.”

In addition to the finance related groups, Jeansonne is also involved in several other groups.

He has served as the chairman of the development committee for St. Mary Basilica and Cathedral School, chairman of the Natchez-Adams County Chamber of

Commerce, and he has been the president for the Rotary Club of Natchez and the

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Beneath the Radar as much as I can.

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