

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Contact: Amy Phillips**
(609) 534-3472

Cumberland-Salem Counties Distinguished Citizens Award Reception to Honor Local Leaders in 2025

Westampton, NJ [April XX 2025] – The Scouting America Garden State Council will host the annual Cumberland-Salem Counties Distinguished Citizens Award Reception on May 7, 2025, at The Grove at Centerton in Pittsgrove, NJ. The event celebrates individuals who exemplify the values of the Scout Oath and Law through outstanding service and leadership in the community. Tickets, sponsorship opportunities, and tribute options are available at <https://www.gardenstatescouting.org/cumberland-salem-dca/>.

“The Distinguished Citizens Award Reception highlights the incredible dedication and leadership of individuals who positively shape our communities,” said Patrick Linfors, Scout Executive and CEO of the Garden State Council. “Ted Ritter, Jack Swain, and Paul Ackley each embody the spirit of service, inspiring future generations to lead with integrity and purpose.”

This year’s honorees include attorney Ted Ritter of The Ritter Law Office, the Cumberland County honoree; John “Jack” Swain, superintendent of the Salem County Vocational-Technical School District and the Salem County Special Services School District, the Salem County honoree; and longtime Scouter Paul Ackley, who will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Proceeds from the reception support Scouting programs that develop character, citizenship, and leadership skills in youth across southern New Jersey.

Ted Ritter, a lifelong resident of Cumberland County, has practiced law for over five decades and has been a pillar of the Cumberland County Bar. A graduate of Vineland High School and Washington and Lee University School of Law, Ritter has received numerous accolades, including the Cumberland County Professional Lawyer of the Year award in 1998 and the Trial Bar Award from Trial Attorneys of New Jersey in 2003. In addition to his legal work, he serves as a trustee of the Cumberland County Historical Society and is an active member of the Roman Catholic Parish of the Holy Cross.

John “Jack” Swain, a native of Medford, has spent his career shaping the educational landscape in New Jersey. A former student-athlete at Lenape High School and Glassboro State College, he began his career at Marlton Middle School, where he founded the school’s wrestling program. He later held administrative positions at Kingsway Regional High School and Mannington School before becoming superintendent of Salem County’s vocational and special services school districts in 2013. Swain has expanded vocational programs and strengthened community partnerships while also serving as vice president of the New Jersey Council of Vocational-Technical Schools, which oversees all 21 vocational schools in the state.

Paul Ackley, this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, has dedicated his life to Scouting, making a profound impact on countless young people. His commitment to the

principles of Scouting and his steadfast support of youth development have earned him the council's highest honor for lifelong service.

The Scouting America Garden State Council serves the youth of southern New Jersey by providing programs that build character, foster citizenship, and develop leadership skills. Through the dedication of volunteers and community partners, the council aims to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes.

About Scouting America Garden State Council:

The Scouting America Garden State Council is chartered to provide comprehensive support and programs for Scouts across South Jersey. Serving communities in Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem, and parts of Atlantic counties, the council offers a range of Scouting programs, including Cub Scouts (grades K–5), Scouts (ages 11–17), Venturing, Sea Scouts, and Exploring (all co-ed, ages 14–20). Through engaging activities that emphasize outdoor adventures, leadership development, and community service, the Garden State Council prepares youth to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

For more information, visit www.gardenstatescouting.org.



Ted Ritter of The Ritter Law Office



John "Jack" Swain, superintendent of the Salem County Vocational-Technical School District and the Salem County Special Services School District.



Longtime Scouter, Paul Ackley, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award.