

2006 Florida Cities of Excellence Awards Program ▶ Nomination Form

Category (Please check one) See Award Criteria for more information. Please print or type. One nomination per page.

FLORIDA CITY OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

Name of Municipality Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY SPIRIT AWARD

Name of Municipality Nominated _____

Nominated Project _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

MAYOR OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

COUNCIL MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Title _____ Department _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY CLERK OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY FINANCE OFFICIAL (DIRECTOR OR OFFICER) OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated Margie Simmons

Nominated by City of Clearwater
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

**Florida League of Cities
Nomination for City Finance Official of the Year**

**Margie Simmons, CPA
Finance Director**

Margaret "Margie" Simmons is a 24-year veteran of the City of Clearwater. Prior to working in Clearwater she earned a degree in Business Administration from The University of Florida. In 1982, Margie joined the City of Clearwater and was hired as an Accountant II in the Finance Department. During her service with the City, Margie has expanded her talents and skills to hold many responsible positions within our financial areas. In 1984, she became a Certified Public Accountant, enabling her to be promoted just two years later to Director of Internal Audit, and serving in this position until returning to the Finance Department as the Assistant Finance Director. In 1996 she was promoted to Finance Director, the position she currently holds.

During her career, Margie has been active in professional groups such as the Florida Government Finance Officers Association (FGFOA). She was president from 1998-1999 and has served on several committees. During her tenure as president she created several initiatives. She enhanced the FGFOA website and entered into a contractual relationship for professional site maintenance. Margie prepared and guided the FGFOA board of directors in dealing with tough issues, including matters surrounding the FGFOA relationship with the City Clerk's Association and funding issues related to the FGFOA Foundation. Margie has also been active in the FGFOA Scholarship Committee and the Lifetime Achievement Scholarship Committee. She also serves on the Florida League of Cities Investment Advisory Committee which is made up of finance directors of some of the largest cities

in the state and past presidents of the FGFOA. The Advisory Committee meets regularly to assist and consult on issues regarding the investments of the Investment Trust and the Pension Fund.

Margie has consistently maintained a high level of accountability in promoting the City's use of sound accounting principles. The Finance Department currently encompasses the functions of Purchasing, Payroll, Treasury, Debt, Accounting, and Risk Management. Each area having consistently performed well above established standard levels of acceptance. Under her financial direction the City has continued to receive recognition of its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Investment Policy, and Safety Record, to name a few. Due to her years as Internal Audit Director, she is able to provide guidance to our Internal Audit office as needed. Margie is proactive in refinancing City bond issues, resulting in substantial cost savings to our taxpayers. She readily works with staff, Council members and our citizens to explain the complexities of government financial issues in understandable layman terms.

During this past year, she has been instrumental in implementing several initiatives. Under her guidance, the implementation of a new financial computer software package was completed. The entire system was implemented on time and under-budget. The new system provides departmental users with on-line access to all financial process and was implemented with minimal disruption to City staff. During the implementation, she and her staff reworked processes to make use of new technology including purchasing cards and electronic payment capabilities, some of which required working with the software

designers to incorporate the new processes in their software. Other initiatives include completion of utility rate studies, issuance of bonds for capital projects financing, worked with developers on several redevelopment projects, and on-going implementation of an asset allocation model for the pension plan investments. She has devised plans for keeping the City's pension plan well-funded and has implemented plans for dealing with the increasing costs of health and property insurance. She and her staff negotiated 18-month policies for most City property insurance policies, which enabled the City to have only limited renewals during hurricane season, and resulted in the City being partially sheltered from the current property insurance crisis. She continues her valuable participation on several City committees including Resource Management, Strategy, Pension Investment, Policy, Emergency Operations, Projects, and Benefits committees. Financing plans for several of the City's major capital projects initiatives have been completed, including the City's new Beach Walk construction project and the proposed Downtown Boat Slips.

Anyone that knows Margie recognizes her professionalism and technical abilities. Margie never misses a Council meeting and is always available for assistance and guidance. She is a team player that encourages open communication. Margie has an open door policy and always welcomes any questions or suggestions. She enjoys mentoring and teaching others about government finance and has been an active participant in Clearwater's Citizen Academy, which is an annual series of classes to instruct citizens on Clearwater's government. Margie teaches the government finance portion of the academy in the format of a game show she devised called "Myth or Reality". This format has made government finance a fun and interesting topic. She has also taught this class to employee groups as well

as another municipality. Margie is best described as patient considerate, reliable, and ethical. Her management style is characterized by her openness, understanding, and professional cooperation.

Stated in her evaluation, Assistant City Manager Garry Brumback stated,

"Margie Simmons is the consummate Finance Director. She has been charged with the daunting responsibility of keeping all City finances solvent, balanced and disbursed in a timely and ethical manner and has done so flawlessly. She is the sole source for strategic financial planning and is constantly seeking new and creative ways to support the City Manager as he tries to meet the goals for the City Council. Margie has developed a strong team of professionals whom she has trained to perform all the daily functions of the Finance Department and constantly reinforces her very high standards. The results have been an award-winning department recognized as outstanding. Margie is an exceptional team player and a valued asset to the City Management Team."

Margie is married, and the mother of three young adults. She continues to be a professional and personal asset to our organization and the citizens of Clearwater. The City of Clearwater is proud to nominate Margie Simmons for the Florida League of Cities "Finance Official of the Year" award.