

SENIOR LIFESTYLES

Retired bank exec raises funds for immigrants

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

PITTSFORD — In an era marked by calls to limit immigration, Dick Scott is spending his retirement years helping people who seek a new life in this country.

"I think refugees are very important to our country," Scott, 71, remarked during an interview in his home.

Refugees and immigrants are so important to Scott that he serves as volunteer chairman of the Catholic Family Center's fund-raising committee for its Refugee and Immigration Service Department. The department helps refugees and immigrants become economically and socially independent.

CFC recognized Scott when the agency named him its 1995 Volunteer of the Year. An agency newsletter, *Centerline*, lauded Scott for his six years of work with the committee.

"He has shown outstanding initiative in organizing the committee, recruiting new members, contacting outside people in a position to assist the committee, personally meeting with pastors and others to solicit donations, and a long list of other activities of personal involvement," the article stated.

Edward Patane, CFC's director of refugee and immigration services, said Scott's committee has raised up to \$30,000 yearly to aid the department's work.

"If we didn't have Dick Scott there ... and his group, we would be in dire straits," Patane said.

The lively senior draws on his extensive experience with the Rochester business community to raise the money, experience Scott gained as an executive vice president with Marine Midland Bank where he worked for 39½ years.

"I never got my 40-year pin," joked Scott, who retired in 1989.

One of his former colleagues at Marine Midland recognized Scott for both his business expertise and his tireless work on behalf of those who resettle in the diocese after leaving such countries as Vietnam, Bosnia, Cuba, Haiti and Russia.

Lawrence J. Oberlies, who belongs to St. Louis Parish in Pittsford along with Scott, cited the fact that Scott regularly arranges detailed, informative meetings



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
Dick Scott, a parishioner at St. Louis Church in Pittsford, holds his "Volunteer of the Year" award from the Catholic Family Center. He received the award for his work with refugees.

between CFC staffers and leaders of charitable foundations.

"He's effective because he brings the right people into the loop of the discussion," said Oberlies, executive vice president and trust officer of Marine Midland. "He works as a bridge from the grantee who needs the money to the grantor who has the money."

John N. O'Neill, an area automobile manufacturing representative on the fund-raising committee, echoed Oberlies' view of Scott as a man who knows how to use his business connections on behalf of charity.

"He's got a lot of friends and associates," O'Neill said. "He drops a name, and we go and do it."

Scott is fairly humble about his work with the committee, noting that he got started in it after he volunteered to help resettle a Vietnamese family sponsored by St. Louis Parish in the late 1980s. What was to be a six-month commitment to transport the family to various appointments turned into a two-year relationship with them, he said.

"It was just without end," he remembered.

Through his work, he was invited to serve on the fund-raising committee, and

at only his second meeting, he was elected chairman. Scott added that he felt helping refugees — in particular, Amerasians, the Vietnamese offspring of U.S. servicemen — was not only an exercise in charity, but an upholding of duty. Vietnamese offspring of U.S. soldiers suffer discrimination in Vietnam, he explained.

traveling with his father. The pair were listening to a Notre Dame game on the radio when the father bet his son five cents that Notre Dame would win. Much to Scott's chagrin, his father won the bet.

"He said 'Let that be a lesson to you. Never bet against Notre Dame,'" Scott recalled.

"And he never has," Jean added.

"They have no future, and we created the situation," Scott commented.

He added that the United States can only benefit from refugees like the Vietnamese who come here.

"I found that these people were very hardworking and conscientious," he said.

Although he enjoys sharing information on CFC's work with refugees and immigrants, it is obvious Scott would prefer to talk about his real love in life — Notre Dame University football. Every fall, he and his wife of 49 years, Jean, travel to South Bend, Ind., home of the Fighting Irish and the alma mater of their son, Paul.

"It's a wonderful place," Scott said of Notre Dame. "I kind of call it the Disneyland of the Midwest."

He attributed his faith in the Fighting Irish to an incident that took place when he was a child

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