

CHARLES VITA **PERSON OF THE YEAR 2011**

Charles Joseph Vita is a local business man, who began his business career at the age of 18 when he purchased his first piece of property while driving around in an old beat up Volkswagen. He has been focused on business ever since. Charlie has been married to his lovely wife, Vendetta, for over 30 years. They have two grown children, Charles III and Lea. Lea teaches in the Kings Park School System and Charles the III is a paralegal.

Charlie, as everyone in Kings Park knows him, spent every summer of his childhood in San Remo at his grandfather's summer house, which his grandfather bought in 1933. He had made many friends during his summer visits and after graduation from Uniondale High School, Charlie moved to Kings Park. Charlie considers himself an honorable and loyal Kings Parker. As a junior in high school he had joined the Naval Reserve and, after graduation, in February of 1965 he was called to active duty and served in Vietnam. In Vietnam he was part of the Navy SEABEES construction battalion, building roads and landing strips. After his discharge, he began working for the Operating Engineers, Local 138. During that time, he graduated from Farmingdale State with an Associates Degree. In 1973, while he was still working as an operating engineer, he opened up Good Time Charlie's, a tavern, down on Riviera Drive. About that time he also began to expand his business interests. He purchased properties in the Smithtown and Kings Park area and began to spot build. He sold some of the houses he built but also kept some for rental purposes. He also began to buy business properties. One of his many businesses was the opening of a Gulf gas station on Pulaski Rd. in Kings Park in 1978.

Charlie is a generous and dependable supporter of many local causes. People in town can always rely on him to help get things done. He has been a long and active member of many community groups. As a local business man he has been a member of the Kings Park Chamber of Commerce for well over 20 years. He is also active in the San Remo Civic Association, one of the oldest civic associations on Long Island. He joined the Father John Papallo Lodge, Sons of Italy in America when it was started in 1994. Charlie is also a member of the American Legion in Kings Park. Last year he added to his civic memberships by joining the Elks Lodge 2036 in Smithtown.

After 23 years of business he sold the gas station and went into what he calls semi-retirement. Charlie continues to have a business flare and is still active in the area and he certainly hasn't "retired" from being a generous and concerned resident of our community. In a very quiet way, and many times without being asked, he continues to give – his time, his donations, his service and his advice - wherever there is a need. The Chamber is proud to honor Charlie Vita as our

PERSON OF THE YEAR FOR 2011.