



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

January 24, 2025

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Barry Ray Recognized as Varnell Jr. Leadership Award Winner

CLEVELAND, TN – Barry Ray, CEO and founder of Legacy Senior Living, has been chosen as the 2025 Robert W. Varnell Jr. Leadership Award winner, one of the highest honors bestowed by the Chamber.

Barry Ray was acknowledged as the 2025 winner at the Chamber’s 99th Annual Meeting on Thursday, January 23. He was nominated and chosen by his peers and former award recipients not only because of his success with Legacy Senior Living, but also for his community leadership, service, and dedication to his faith. He has dedicated countless hours to his faith, not only as a devoted member of Westmore Church of God but also as a community leader who helps guide others both professionally and spiritually. Whether it’s helping to develop and lead Bible study groups, serving on the global mission team, or working in the nursery, Barry has shown what it means to lead with compassion, wisdom, and humility.

Nominator Lyle Swartzel says, “While Barry shies away from public recognition, his impact is evident throughout our community. His significant contributions of time and resources were instrumental in the development of the Westmore Church property on Candies Lane.” Lyle continues, “Alongside being someone who has impacted our community through economic development, he gives and serves selflessly to ministries not just within Cleveland but around the world.”

His commitment to service is a testament to his character. He has served on various boards, including Lee University’s Business Department, TN Faith-Based and Community Initiative, TN

Fellowship of Christian Athletes, The Missions Resource Group, TN Labor and Workforce Development, and many others.

Barry and his wife, Iris, have three children: Brooke, Blake, and Christina, and 10 grandchildren.

Presented in memory of the late Robert W. Varnell Jr., the award recognizes a person demonstrating excellence in leadership and profession, commitment to community, religion, high morals, and ethical standards.

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