

# Fund-raiser pays tribute to businesses

## Event held to promote education

BY AMANDA NELSON  
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The Corpus Christi Business Hall of Fame is set to induct four new laureates next week.

Freddie Martinez of Freddie Records, Bonnie Pereida of Merrill Lynch, Erich Wendl of the former Maverick Markets and the late Howard E. Butt Sr. of H-E-B will be honored Wednesday for contributing to the betterment of Corpus Christi through business excellence, vision and innovation.

The criteria by which the honorees were selected include business excellence, courageous thinking and action, vision and innovation, inspiring leadership and community impact.

The annual event is a fundraiser for Junior Achievement of the Coastal Bend, said district director Jayne Woodall, and proceeds benefit the organization's efforts to provide economic education programs for local children through age-specific curriculum.

"This is all to help young people have better economic thinking skills from grade school all the way through high school," said Rich Tuttle, chairman of Junior Achievement's Coastal Bend board.

The banquet and induction this year will be at the Omni Bayfront Hotel.

The committee that chooses the laureates each year wants to honor people in the communi-

### HOW TO ATTEND

Contact Jayne Woodall, 242-3180, for ticket information.

ty who have been successful in business — some of them as entrepreneurs — and people who have given a great deal back to the community, Woodall said.

"As you can tell from our list, they come from all different segments of the business world," she said.

Woodall said this is the first year the organization has given a posthumous award.

"H-E-B is just such a big part of our community," Woodall said. "Even though they didn't originate in Corpus Christi, really the foundation of their business was built in Corpus Christi."

Junior Achievement is a nonprofit organization that starts teaching children at a young age what types of businesses and careers are available in a community, Woodall said.

"A lot of times, they only know what their parents do," she said.

Woodall said one example of the organization's programs is one for third graders called "Our City" — the group's first lesson was to learn about what a city planner does.

Tuttle said this is the organization's major fundraiser for the year, and he hopes the event will bring in about \$70,000 for sustaining and growing Junior Achievement in the Coastal Bend.

Contact Amanda Nelson at 886-3678 or [nelsona@caller.com](mailto:nelsona@caller.com)

## HONOREE PROFILES

### HOWARD E. BUTT SR.



Butt took over his family's grocery business after World War I and began expanding into other communities with innovative concepts such as one-stop shopping. In 1952, the grocery chain's first combination food and drug store opened in Corpus Christi. H-E-B celebrates its 100th anniversary this year and operates stores across Texas, Louisiana and in Mexico. Howard E. Butt Sr. died in 1991 and his award will be the first awarded posthumously by the Corpus Christi Business Hall of Fame.

### FREDDIE MARTINEZ



Although his album "Te Traigo Estas Flores" ("I Bring You These Flowers") in 1971 made Martinez the largest-drawing Latin artist at the time, he left the success he found as an artist in 1977 to concentrate on producing Latino music. Martinez opened a \$6.5 million headquarters and state-of-the-art recording studio in Corpus Christi in 2002, and Freddie Records artists have received numerous Grammys and Grammy nominations. He was nominated for a Grammy as best songwriter in 2004 for the hit "Titere en sus manos."

### BONNIE PEREIDA



Pereida began her career with Merrill Lynch as executive secretary to the manager. Pereida's rise to success began with a correspondence course from the New York Institute of Finance, which she completed in three months rather than the typical two years. Pereida eventually became the first female stockbroker in Corpus Christi. She reached the Charles E. Merrill Circle of Excellence for \$1 million in production in 1991, and today Pereida manages \$200 million in assets. She has been with Merrill Lynch for almost 50 years.

### ERICH WENDL



Wendl came to South Texas from his birthplace in Haar, Germany, with plans to stay a year and a half. After being drafted into the U.S. Army he became a naturalized citizen.

Wendl eventually worked his way to top salesman at Boggus Ford in Harlingen before he bought five small stores in Corpus Christi and renamed them Maverick Markets.

He eventually grew those five stores into 115, which he later sold. Wendl was a leader in developing professional groups for convenience store retail grocery owners, and several of his employees worked for him for the entire 34 years he ran Maverick Markets.