

July 21, 2005

--For Immediate Release --

Little America Server Receives Governor's Award

Eleanor Gardner has spent more than 50 years serving locals, government officials, even the occasional rich and famous. The much-requested server at Little America's Western Gold Dining Room is probably most comfortable taking care of her customers. At the Arizona Governor's Office of Tourism awards luncheon, the roles were finally reversed.

This time it was Governor Janet Napolitano doing the presenting, as Gardner received the Governor's 2005 Spirit of Service Award.

Gardner was nominated by the Flagstaff Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and the bureau's Meg Ryan was delighted to see the town receive it's first such award since 1997. "She exemplifies the Arizona tourism industry's commitment to exceptional customer service with her spirit to serve for more than five decades. We are grateful and impressed with the impact she has had on tourism in Flagstaff."

Little America's General Manager, Dietrich Mayring, was also thrilled to see a front-line employee receive the prestigious award. "Eleanor has been with us for more than 31 years," Mayring said. "Customers will actually wait a couple of hours on busy holidays to sit at one of her tables."

Eleanor joined Little America as a server when the hotel opened in 1973. She already had her own following, bringing with her more than 19 years experience as a waitress in the northern Arizona area. Since that year she has worked serving the property's well-known Sunday Champagne Brunch, and also currently works in fine dining in the Western Gold Dining Room.

The award was presented July 11 at the luncheon during the Governor's Conference on Tourism in Phoenix. More than 600 industry representatives attended.



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