

2005 TLPA Limousine & Sedan Chauffeur of the Year

Michael J. Zattero, Transport the People, Inc., Pittsfield, Massachusetts

The Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association is proud to announce that Michael J. Zattero, chauffeur at Transport The People, Inc., Pittsfield, Mass., has been selected as the TLPA 2005 Limousine & Sedan Chauffeur of the Year.

Transport The People General Manager James Regan nominated Michael for the Chauffeur of the Year award. Mr. Regan wrote, "Michael has been driving for this company for 12 years and has an impeccable record. He has never had an at-fault accident since he has been driving for us. He has driven over 800,000 miles in that time. Every account that we send him on as the driver requests him on their next trip. In fact, Michael is constantly requested to the point that he cannot possibly drive them all.

"Michael is always on time and he is willing to take on any type of transport, from transporting school children to long nights on the town. On several occasions he has changed his time-off plans to accommodate us in serving our customers. He is able to drive everything from the smallest sedan to 15-passenger vans with trailers to our 120" stretch limousines. Michael will take the time to talk to people to gain more accounts. ... Michael is the consummate professional driver, and I believe he is qualified and deserving of this award."

Michael was born and raised in Pittsfield. He worked for General Electric for 25 years as an assembler, machine operator and wireman, and continued to work for Martin Marietta after the company purchased his GE unit. In 1993, he began working as a chauffeur for Transport The People after being laid off at Martin Marietta. Michael says of working for Transport The People: "I enjoy the fact that they are a leader in the industry in this area and that they respect me and my abilities. When I joined Transport The People 12 years ago, it was a small business. It has grown over the years, and I would like to think that my good service and dedication has been part of the rea-



2005 Limousine & Sedan Chauffeur of the Year Michael J. Zattero, chauffeur for Transport The People, Inc., Pittsfield, Mass.

son for its growth and success."

Michael states, "I believe a number of things make a good driver. Among them is doing your homework. Know where you're driving to at all times; do not rely on clients to help with directions. Also, punctuality is crucial. Be on time; help with luggage, and another little touch I provide is to have a local newspaper on hand for my traveling clients to read. Also, knowing when to hold a conversation with someone and taking notice of when to keep to myself and allow them to relax is important. In other words, know when to converse and when not to. Driving has been an enjoyable career because it offers flexibility, the opportunity to travel, and the pleasure of meeting a wide variety of truly good people."

Michael has seen the industry change over his 12 years as a chauffeur. "As the years have passed, many things have changed in the limousine industry," he says. "For example, my pay and tipping has increased, which is a good change, and the industry in our area has become more regulated, which has been mostly for the good. For example, here in Massachusetts, there is a limit on the lengths of limousines (138-1/2 inches). I believe this is a good regulation because of safety concerns. As far as I am concerned 'Safety is # 1' But, it used to be when arriving at a function in a limou-

sine, right away you received preferential treatment, priority parking, and exceptional privileges that allowed you to drive right up to the door to drop clients off. More and more today, limousines do not receive that special recognition. It's almost as if you're arriving in a regular vehicle, which is why I believe some people are discouraged from hiring a limousine vehicle."

In the past few years, Michael has transported several celebrities. Recently he had the opportunity to transport Tony Bennett, who was performing at Tanglewood in Lenox, Mass. He says that one celebrity he enjoyed driving for was Al Roker of the "Today Show."

While he enjoys transporting famous people, it is the notes he and the company receive from local citizens in Pittsfield that mean the most to Michael. One wrote, "Thank you for the fantastic limo ride Saturday night. It was great to help the March of Dimes and have so much fun at the same time." Another wrote, "Greetings, I would like to say thank you to your staff at Transport The People. My friends and I were extremely happy with the trip to Fenway Park on April 18. Mike, our driver, was courteous and professional. We will definitely be using you again and I am referring your company to all our friends, family and associates."

Michael is the father of Michelle, Michael II and Matthew, and grandfather of Brent, Makayla and Vanessa. In his spare time, he enjoys watching baseball and football, playing darts, working around the house, and spending time with his family. His reaction when he was told that he had been selected as the TLPA 2005 Chauffeur of the Year was: "I was very happy to see that hard work does pay off. I would like to thank the people at TLPA for this award."

In honor of his professionalism and his commitment to the safety of his passengers, the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association is proud to recognize Michael J. Zattero as the TLPA 2005 Limousine & Sedan Chauffeur of the Year. ■