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Republicans Name 62 Who Raised Big Money

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The Republican National Committee yesterday disclosed the names of 62 "Super Rangers" -- the new elite of fundraisers who have replaced the high-dollar corporate, union and wealthy donors of the past.

Each CEO, state party chairman, lobbyist, investor, elected official or corporate lawyer designated as a Super Ranger has raised at least \$300,000 for the Republican Party, all from individuals in amounts of \$25,000 or less.

Becoming a Super Ranger is -- for the moment -- the highest achievement for fundraisers in either party.

Bundlers, or collectors, of multiple individual contributions have supplanted big corporate, union and individual donors as the key players since the 2002 McCain-Feingold law banned unlimited "soft money" contributions, some of which exceeded \$1 million. Both major political parties and the candidates have come up with a plethora of new names for successful fundraisers, using the designations as incentives to reach ever-higher goals.

The Democratic National Committee two weeks ago named 17 "Trustees" who had raised at least \$250,000 each, and 171 "Patriots" who raised at least \$100,000 apiece. The Bush-Cheney '04 campaign has "Rangers" who have raised at least \$200,000 each and "Pioneers" who have raised at least \$100,000 apiece. Democrat John F. Kerry has "vice chairs" who have raised \$100,000 each and "co-chairs" who have raised at least \$50,000 apiece.

Almost all, 54 out of 62, of the Super Rangers had already qualified as Rangers or as Pioneers, in the Bush-Cheney reelection campaign, according to calculations by Public Citizen, a consumer organization. This means that those who are Rangers and Super Rangers have raised a minimum of \$500,000 apiece during the current election cycle, and those ranked as Super Rangers and Pioneers have raised \$400,000 each.

Almost all the Super Rangers are well-known figures in political circles, although less well known in general.

They include Washington and Texas lobbyist Thomas G. Loeffler, whose clients last year included Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. and Southwest Airlines Co.; Richard T. Farmer, chairman of Cintas Corp., the industrial laundry firm; Betsy DeVos, whose husband was president of Amway Corp.; Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.); lobbyist Aubrey A. Rothrock III, whose clients last year included the Mars Co. and Wal-Mart Stores Inc.; and Carl H. Linder, majority owner of the Cincinnati Reds and former chief executive of Chiquita Brands International Inc.

A number of the Super Rangers have been favorably treated by the Bush administration.

The Federal Communications Commission has allowed A. Jerrold Perenchio, chairman and chief executive of Univision, to significantly expand his holdings in Hispanic media outlets, by approving the merger last year of Univision Communications Inc. and Hispanic Broadcasting Corp. President Bush appointed William O. DeWitt Jr. to the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

Public Citizen yesterday released analyses of the Super Rangers and of Kerry's 335 bundlers.

The dominant industry among the Super Rangers, according to Public Citizen, was finance, insurance and real estate, which produced more than a third of the mega-bundlers. Lawyers were second, followed by energy and natural resources company executives, construction company executives, and communications and electronics company executives.

The 335 Kerry bundlers raised at least \$25 million. Public Citizen found that lawyers dominated the Kerry fundraisers, producing at least \$6.3 million, of which \$2.6 million was raised by trial lawyers.

Bundlers working in the finance industry were second, producing at least \$4.75 million, followed by real estate, \$1.95 million; media and entertainment, \$1.75 million; and lobbyists, \$1.65 million. More than a third of Kerry's bundlers, 114, are from California, followed by New York, 71, and Massachusetts, 35.

Raising money for a federal candidate requires far more work than raising money for the political parties.

The limit on individual contributions to a candidate is \$2,000 so that those seeking to be a Bush Ranger, for example, must collect a minimum of 100 \$2,000 checks to reach the \$200,000 goal. Someone seeking to be an RNC Super Ranger could collect just 12 checks of \$25,000 each to qualify.

Researcher Lucy Shackelford contributed to this report.