

Distinctive Service Award Goes to Investigative Team

A CHICAGO TRIBUNE Task Force series exposing nursing home abuses was awarded the first Distinctive Service Award of the Illinois Interprofessional Council last night during ceremonies in the Swedish Club of Chicago.

Awards were presented to THE TRIBUNE and to the individual reporters, William Jones, Task Force director; Philip Caputo, William Currie and Pamela Zekman.

The series was the result of a six-week investigation in cooperation with the Better Government Association in which reporters and investigators worked and lived in more than 20 Chicago area nursing homes. The eight-part series that resulted exposed patient abuse, filth and a wide variety of other deficiencies.

The 10,000-member council



Philip Caputo [left], Susan Nelson and Robert Markus.

represents the Illinois State Dental Society, the Illinois Optometric Association, the Illinois Osteopathic Association, the Illinois Podiatry Association, the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association and the Illinois Pharmaceutical Association. The award is to be given annually.

The series prompted hearings by the United States Senate Committee on Aging in April and again two weeks ago aimed at new federal laws to curb nursing home abuses.

State and city health officials announced crackdowns following the disclosures, and dozens of substandard nursing homes have been ordered into court or closed in recent months.