



EDITORIAL

By C. Ron Allen

The Real Unsung Hero

Twenty-three years ago, the late Jim Moran began a tradition. He knew that every day in the tri-county area, Americans were finding ways to serve others and give back to their communities - often with very few resources and very little recognition.

And Mr. Moran knew that their good works were valuable to the people they helped - but beyond that, he knew that their spirit of service was vital to our national character. So he created an award, the African-American Achievers awards, to recognize Americans who serve their neighbors and communities in innovative ways that inspire us all. He also wanted to inspire future generations.

Until his passing in 2007, Mr. Moran made sure these unsung heroes were recognized every year. Just before his death, he made a charge to his successor, Colin Brown, president and CEO of JM Family Enterprises Inc., to ensure the tradition continues. He also recognizes the youth with an achiever award, named after the late attor-

ney Jerome Edmund Gray, a 1995 African-American Achiever.

The needs-based, four-year scholarship to Florida State University is funded through The Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship at FSU.

Each achiever has had a compelling success story.

I have been fortunate to be in attendance at all except four ceremonies since its inception, either as a newspaper reporter or as a guest. I was absent those four years because of military obligations overseas. I am also honored to be a 2006 recipient.

If the purpose of this award is to celebrate Americans who work to make our communities a better place - not for their own advantage or for any ulterior motives, but just to serve, pure and simple - I can't think of anyone more deserving than Mr. Moran himself.

For about two decades, Mr. Moran was South Florida's top philanthropist, with Women in Distress, the Youth Automotive

Training Center, and countless other charitable acts. The automotive training center in Deerfield Beach has been a beacon and possibly even a lifesaver for a lot of economically disadvantaged black kids. And Women in Distress has been a refuge for countless women when they need it most. This South Florida tradition may seem perfectly ordinary to many Americans, especially those who have grown up during this period. But, in fact, it reflects tremendous progress. And today we can say that our country is a better and a stronger force for good in the world because, more and more, we are a people that serve.

And for that, we have to thank Mr. Moran, and his better half, Jan, who is just as committed as her husband to service, and has dedicated her life to it as well.

As a proud member of this African-American Achievers fraternity, I am happy to help carry forward that legacy.

I am one of several thousands who have been inspired by Mr. Moran's passion and

his commitment. He has helped so many Americans discover that they, too, have something to contribute - that they, too, have the power to make a difference.

On behalf of all past recipients, let me say that South Florida is surely a kinder and gentler region because of Mr. Moran and we can't thank him enough.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 23rd annual African-American Achievers awards, presented by JM Family Enterprises, Southeast Toyota Distributors and JM Lexus. Nomination applications are available online at www.africanamerican-achievers.com, on the African-American Achievers' Facebook page or by calling 866-516-2497 for a hard-copy nomination form. Nominations are due by Friday, Dec. 5, 2014. The awards presentation and ceremony will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2015 at the Broward County Convention Center.

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