

PACE Awards • February 19, 2008

7:00 Opening Remarks: Evon

Pensacola is poised for greatness. Pensacola is a genuine treasure and we're lucky to call it home. And we're equally lucky to share our great city with the leaders that have come together here tonight. We honor those whose contributions have achieved milestones for continued growth in Pensacola. And whether that growth can be seen in economic development, improvement in our education system, cleaner environment, better health, affordable housing or reduction in poverty, the private citizens in our community that rise to make strides in these areas are to be commended. And tonight, we'll do just that.

The PACE Awards committee has painstakingly chosen 6 individuals who have served Pensacola above and beyond the call of duty and have devoted their time to our community. With the generous help of WEAR, in tonight's presentation, you'll be introduced to these special people as you've never seen them before. Our honorees are not only the extraordinary humanitarians we know and recognize, they have unique interests, special talents and histories. This year, we wanted to lend a distinctive flair to the festivities and highlight both the ground-breaking

accomplishments of these people, and celebrate them for the truly individual people that they are.

Our first award presentation of the evening is a very special one. It is an award that isn't given every year. The Pioneer Award is a unique award-given only in those years when it becomes apparent that a particular individual has broken new ground and nurtured the growth of uncharted territory. The Pioneer Award has only been given eleven times since 1978 when it was first awarded. This year, we have identified a brilliant pioneer in Pensacola.

Our Pioneer Award recipient grew up as the son of a fisherman and English teacher. His father insisted that he would not be a fisherman. He would earn an education and, even though the son very much wanted a boat and loved to fish, the father wanted his son to follow more in his mother's footsteps rather than in his own seafaring ways.

So with this influence, this Cedar Key native majored in Physical Education at the University of Florida. He then pursued his Masters degree with a focus on intramural programs in community colleges and earned his Doctorate in higher education. He began his career in academia in 1976 as a staff member at Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, Florida. He

later became the Director of Management Information Services, served as the Associate Dean of Human Resources and Planning and then the Dean of Information Technology and Planning.

Our Pioneer Award winner received the Exemplary Leadership Award and was appointed to serve on the Committee for a Sustainable Emerald Coast by Governor Bush. He serves on the boards of United Way, Escarosa Regional Workforce Development Council, Communities in School of NW Florida, E-CARE, the Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the Pensacola Five Flags Rotary Club.

And he also finds the time to do what he loves most, even though his father would not let him have the boat that he so wanted in his youth, . . . fishing!

He has a profound love for his community and his college. This community will surely feel his loss this year as he retires from his post as the President of Pensacola Junior College and moves back to his original hometown of Cedar Key.

It is with great pride and admiration, that we present the Pioneer Award to Dr. Tom Delaino.

Our next award this evening is presented to the **Emerging Leader of the Year.**

This year's Emerging Leader of the Year, is motivated by helping others and having a positive impact on his community. His goals as a developing leader in Pensacola include focusing on the community in order to create jobs and improve the local quality of life. He knows that making a difference, requires community involvement. He serves on the Board of Workforce Escarosa and the Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. He is the Technology Advisor to the West Florida High School ACE Program, a member of PJC's DOETA Community Based Job Training Grant Program and even created a Young Professional Program at his own company which encourages high school students to go to college. Our 2008 Emerging Leader Award recipient is quite invested in the future of our community.

Personally, he grew up in a family of technology experts. His father works in an elite technological program at the Pentagon and worked with similar projects in the Air Force. Growing up, he was all but groomed to go into the information technology field. As a high school student, moving around from school to school because of his father's military obligations, he took

up playing the saxophone, but found himself increasingly more interested in the school's mainframe computer than band practice. And in his spare time as a young teen, he enjoyed nothing more than playing a Commodore 64 and figuring out how to write that game himself! He had aspirations of becoming a Navy pilot, which he accomplished after graduating with honors from Florida A & M University. He received his pilot training in Pensacola flying EP3 specialty planes. He then served in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. And for that, we thank him.

But his accomplishments don't stop there. In 1998 he bought Pensacola Internet and later sold it to Network Telephone where he became the IT Director. He was intricately involved with the building of the IT infrastructure of 9 South Eastern States. Then, in 2001, Hixardt Technologies was born, and he began his current journey of providing IT support and specialized services to local small businesses. He developed a tremendously successful business, built the IT infrastructure of Pensacola and much of that of the Southeastern United States and continues to mentor the young future of our community. But you'd never know all this was done while battling the brink of kidney failure. Illness didn't stop him. This year's Emerging Leader of the Year is truly a man to be celebrated.

It is with great pride and admiration, that we present the 2008 Emerging Leader of the Year, Michael Hicks.

Our next Award presentation of the evening is to the **Professional Leader of the Year.**

As with most of our PACE Award recipients, we have a hard time getting these individuals to talk about themselves. They always want to give credit to the people that surround them and display remarkable humility. This year's Professional Leader of the Year is no different. When asked what his greatest accomplishment of the last year was, he immediately began crediting the organization for which he works and the people that work with him. Though his successes are innumerable and his ambitions are inspiring, this man is as unassuming as they come. He is a great manager and a great leader. He is caring. And that caring spirit is what led him to a profession in the care-giving business.

This man is multi-talented. He has what it takes to be a great leader and success in any field; but he chose patient care. He joined the Navy in 1965 as a search and rescue hospital corpsman during Vietnam, and then served as a project director of the modern day hospital ships during the Reagan

Administration. His education was focused on Hospital and Healthcare Services Administration. He completed post-graduate studies at the Wharton School of Business garnering him doctoral candidacy in Health Care Administration. He is a member of the American College of Health Care Executives, holds numerous leadership roles with national, state and federal Hospice and service organizations. And he was recently named as a national board member with the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. He also serves on countless community boards. And if this service weren't impressive enough, he even serves as an adjunct professor with the School of Public Health at the University of West Florida and is a founding member of the UWF Center for Aging Studies.

By now, it's clear that our Professional Leader of the Year recipient could have chosen anywhere to work, live and play, but he chose the great City of Pensacola. He wanted to manage a business that cares, in a great town, and does so at Covenant Hospice during a very difficult period in history. Covenant Hospice is playing a huge roll in the care of this elderly population in a time when care is often hard to find.

Our Community Leader of the Year is a man to be celebrated. He is deserving of this award. Not only because he gives selflessly to the

community and to his career, but also because he would gladly give a person the shirt off his back and constantly finds ways to give credit to others.

It is with great pride and admiration, that we present the **2008**

Professional Leader of the Year to Dale Knee.

Our next presentation of the evening is to the **Community Leader of the Year.**

This year's Community Leader of the Year has contributed in so many different ways. He has spent most of his life in academia. He has served on numerous national advisory boards and state councils including a current post on the National Flight Academy Advisory Board. Currently, he serves on the boards of the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra and Covenant Hospice, Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and is a principal in the Vince Whibbs Community Maritime Park. And in his own words he tells us that, "no accomplishment by a leader is done single handedly." He embodies the spirit of community and is an expert at rallying the troops. He considers his greatest accomplishment of the last year to be that of launching UWF's public phase of the "Creating Great Futures" Campaign.

This is the largest fundraising effort in either UWF's or Pensacola's history that will strengthen the future of people who will attend college.

Our Community Leader of the year is an impressive individual. While serving as the President of the University of West Florida, he actively nurtures relationships with surrounding community colleges to strengthen the education system and increase the rate of college attendance in the minority population. He understands the diversity of our community and embraces it while aiding in the creation of new opportunities wherever possible.

He describes his leadership style as inclusive, accessible, collaborative and participative. He believes in forging relationships and mobilizing a region to make significant change for progress. He knows that community is the answer for establishing sustainability for ground breaking projects. He knows the value of partnerships and understands that any successful project has to out last its founder in order to achieve sustainability.

And in this amazing caldron of accomplishments he still finds the time to cook up his own culinary masterpieces while at home. He told us that if it were not for academia, he would likely have been either a chef or a musician. But we certainly encourage him to keep on cooking up the

community masterpieces we've seen him create over the years in Pensacola.

There's no question that this year's Community Leader of the Year is quite deserving of this honor.

Please join me in congratulating the 2008 Community Leader of the Year, **Dr. John Cavanaugh.**

Our next Award presentation of the evening is to the **Business Leader of the Year.**

This year's Business Leader of the Year recipient believes that helping people realize their fullest potential is the most rewarding part of being a good leader.

This Florida Gator (pause for a moment and look in to the crowd), I guess we'll absolve him of that!- manages a 600-person company, that is really a conglomeration of 3 companies all in one. The growth and profitability of his company has been largely due to their transformation under his leadership from being a video service provider to becoming a broadband telecommunications provider. For over 9 years, he has changed the business from a residential service provider to a business service provider.

He has seen many changes in his industry and company over his 29 years with the company. He began his tenure as a college student and rose to become the executive he is today. And in that time, has been one of two individuals to receive the company's prestigious Jim Robbins Helmsman Award for Leadership.

Our Business Leader is a strong family man who adores his children and one grand child and treasures few things more than a good round of golf on Saturday morning. He is a member of the Pensacola Rotary Club, the Board of Governors of the Pensacola Junior College Foundation, the Board of Directors of the Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of Escambia County and is Past Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Florida Cable Telecommunications Association. He believes in community. He believes in this community.

He likes to stay actively engaged. And, he's not afraid to get in to the trenches. After Hurricane Ivan, he rolled up his sleeves and worked right along side of the field crew to get Pensacola back up and running. He's a go getter, but he's humble, as many of our award recipients tend to be. And this man never stops learning. He is a hands-on kind of guy and endeavors to emulate the best of the people who surround him. And his

leadership style motivates others, inspires them and makes people want to become better individuals.

Please join me in a round of applause as we honor our Business Leader of the year, **Keith Gregory**.

Our final Award presentation of the evening is the **Spirit of Pensacola Award**.

The Spirit of Pensacola award is typically given to an individual that embodies the "Spirit of Pensacola" and who has given outstanding service in the business, industry, professional and community field. The Spirit of Pensacola award recipient always strives for a better Pensacola and possesses a strong passion for strengthening the community. This year, we honor an entire organization.

This year's Sprit of Pensacola award recipient, in only 4 short years, has been a powerhouse of giving in our community. The organization started out with an "ah ha" moment of a woman who considers herself a closet People Magazine reader, . . .and everyone knows who she is! She read an article about a similar group that started doing great things in their community. With the help of her board, this organization quickly grew. In 2004, its first year, they recruited 233 members. This group was able to

award 2 grants to our community that first year totaling over \$230,000. The second year, the organization grew to 250 members and awarded grants totaling \$250,000. Year 3 was even more impressive, with a jump in membership to 340 members, the group awarded \$340,000 to the community and in year 4 with 472 members, the organization awarded an astonishing \$472,000 in 2007. From projects benefiting the Good Samaritan Clinic, which serves the healthcare needs of the working poor in Santa Rosa County, to ARC Gateway, which serves developmentally disabled children and adults, to Bravo for Kids, which helps provide musical instruments to students attending middle schools in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties and the Northwest Florida Blood Center, which was in critical need of a new bloodmobile, the Spirit of Pensacola 2008 recipient is making incredible strides for our community.

The organization's goal is to offer effective philanthropy through increased awareness, education and high impact giving. And they certainly are good at what they do. The community benefits in so many ways because of this organization. The beneficiaries of their good works are children, elderly, indigent and ailing. And we are all grateful for the good works that they do every year!

Please join me in a round of applause for our Spirit of Pensacola Award winner, IMPACT 100.

Accepting on behalf of the organization is Linda Hoffman, President. I'd like to invite all current and past board members to join her on stage.

Before we bring a close to this wonderful evening, have to extend a few "thank yous."

Sponsors, etc . . .

Thank you to our presenting sponsor, WEAR. Thank you for an amazing video presentation of all of our award winners.

Our Gold Sponsor:
Covenant Hospice

And our Silver Sponsors:
Highpointe Hotel Corporation
Pensacola Junior College
Pensacola Junior College Foundation
University of West Florida
and
Varona Enterprises of Florida, Inc.

Let's take a moment and reflect for a second. . . the six community leaders we recognized here tonight are exceptional. There's no question.

As we said at the beginning of our evening, a long line of leaders have helped to steer the Pensacola community through the years. But you know

what? Our voyage has only just begun. We started out this evening by saying that Pensacola is poised for greatness. And it's people like you all in this room who keep us great and help us get greater.

Look around, in this room tonight. . . who among this distinguished crowd will we recognize next year? . . . I am as sure as the sun will come up tomorrow that the heroism displayed by tonight's winners will serve to inspire many of you to do more.

It has been our honor and privilege to serve you all this evening.

Good night.