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Diversity award winners announced

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Staff Report

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The Seventh Annual Upstate Diversity Leadership Awards Dinner on Tuesday recognized several organizations and individuals for outstanding achievement in promoting diversity in the Upstate.

The was presented by Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System and hosted by the Riley Institute at Furman University, the Greenville Chamber, Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce and Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce.

Award recipients were recognized in the following categories: K-12 School; High School Student; College Student; Nonprofit Organization; Business; International; and Individual.

The K-12 School: The William "Bill" T. Wylie Valued Lives Award for School Excellence went to Fairforest Elementary

School of Spartanburg. Fairforest Elementary School is a culturally diverse school where more than 270 students speak English as a second language, 73% of students receive free or reduced lunch, and families originate from 13 different countries. With such school programs as Write Night, cultural awareness programs across grade levels and arts initiatives, students are gaining world perspectives at a young age. Through their bullying prevention program, Olweus, students and parents receive guidance lessons aimed at eliminating violence and bullying.

High School Student: The Outstanding High School Student Award, presented by Bi-Lo went to Carla Littlejohn, a senior student at Greenville Technical Charter High School. She currently serves as the chairperson for the City of Greenville Youth Commission, where she represents the youth voice of the community. Littlejohn was elected as the first black woman to be the Secretary of the National Beta Club. She also was chosen to represent Greenville Technical Charter High School at the 2010 Black Caucus Leadership Conference, where she served as Speaker of the House. Carla is also a participant in the Bridges to a Brighter Future program at Furman University. During her four years at Greenville Technical Charter High, Carla has logged more than 200 hours of community service. She will continue her education at the University of South Carolina and will be the first generation of her family to attend college.

College Student: Jackeline Galvez, a Clemson University student, was honored with the Outstanding College Student Award presented by Michelin North America. She is a beacon for change in promoting diversity within Clemson University's community. She is active in several programs at Clemson as an advisor and mentor to current and prospective students. As a participant in the FIRST program at Clemson, Galvez works with group members to recruit, support, retain and graduate first-generation college students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines. She also serves as a mentor in the Connections Peer Mentoring program, where she works with first year students from culturally diverse backgrounds and majors. As secretary of the Hispanic Student Association, she assists in the coordination of events and cultural functions within the Hispanic student population. She is also involved in student government, serving as a member of the Clemson University Council on Diversity Affairs.

Nonprofit Organization: The Outstanding Nonprofit Organization Award sponsored by BMW Manufacturing Co. was presented to MLK Dream Weekend. For the past six years, MLK Dream Weekend has held an annual community-wide celebration honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as celebrating the diversity of the Upstate. Through its programs and activities, MLK's central focus lies in its mission statement, which states that "Dreams in Action Change the Future." With a diversity banquet held during the week, more than 5,400 individuals have attended the event over the past six years. In addition to the annual banquet, MLK Dream Weekend has included nationally known speakers, volunteer opportunities for service projects and health education fairs, and they have provided over \$30,000 in scholarship money to students in the Upstate. MLK Dream Weekend involves all people in Greenville and across the Upstate, regardless of race, religion ethnicity or age. Their mission is to encourage students, leaders and the community to celebrate the life and contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. while encouraging education, cultural awareness and inclusion.

Business: Erwin-Penland was honored with the Outstanding Business Award presented by Hughes Agency LLC. As a full-service advertising agency, Erwin-Penland gives its employees opportunities for round-table discussions and allows for a marketplace of ideas to flow in the diverse work culture. Recognizing that diversity takes many forms, Erwin-Penland's human resources department offers benefits and incentives to help the agency attract and retain a diverse workforce. With the creation of the Diversity and Inclusion Council, the agency has extended a helping hand into the community. This council aims to ensure economic inclusion through a supplier diversity program. Erwin-Penland has championed high school and college mentoring programs, sponsored minority internships and provided pro bono support for such organizations as the Urban League and the NAACP.

International: Chirinjev Peterson, Director of International Education at Greenville Tech, received the Outstanding Contribution to International Diversity Award. As the director of the International Education Center at Greenville Tech, Peterson has been able to have an impact on her school, her students and her community. Every day, Peterson oversees major academic and co-curricular activities, which support global views and encourage a diversity of ideas. With a passion for serving her community, she gives her time to her international students at Greenville Tech. She serves as project director for the Undergraduate Studies International and Foreign Languages Program and oversees two foreign exchange programs. Under her leadership, her foreign exchange students at Greenville Tech have accumulated more than 500 hours of community service in this academic year alone.

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Individual; Judith Prince, vice chancellor at University of South Carolina Upstate, was honored with the Calder D. Ehrmann Outstanding Individual Award sponsored by Juan Johnson Consulting and Facilitation, recognizing an individual for outstanding achievement in promoting diversity. With a sustained and passionate commitment to diversity spanning more than 25 years, Prince is an advocate for women in the workplace and the community. For many years, Prince has served as a role model, an inspiration and a cheerleader to the Hispanic-American Women's Association. She has encouraged AHAM members to build their own leadership skills as she hosted the AHAM Leadership Series in 2009 and the Diversity Management Business Seminar in 2010. She has chaired the MLK Dream Weekend, worked with the Greenville Chamber of Commerce, and served as past president of S.C. Women in Higher Education.