
THE LEROY COLLINS
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI
AWARDS

2013

ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA COLLEGES
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING COMMISSION



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2013 LEROY COLLINS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



RITA SMITH
POLK STATE COLLEGE

This award is given annually to a Florida college alumnus who has reached state, regional or national recognition. The recipient represents the highest levels of achievement in his or her field.

RITA SMITH POLK STATE COLLEGE

Since 1993, Rita Smith has served as Executive Director for the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), a non-profit, grassroots organization. In this role, Rita supervises the operation of the national headquarters in Denver, and the Public Policy Office in Washington, D.C. The NCADV provides resources, organization and assistance for individuals and groups across the nation in an effort to end domestic violence.

As Executive Director, Rita works to build corporate partnerships and secure donations. A national expert in the field, she is frequently quoted in media outlets including the New York Times, Washington Post, Associated Press and many local and regional papers. She has made appearances on shows such as “The Oprah Winfrey Show,” “Good Morning America,” “The Today Show,” and many others.

Rita’s responsibilities include working on resources at the federal level, and she has visited the White House during the last three Administrations to promote programs and legislation to benefit victims. In December 2010, Rita was present in the Oval Office to witness President Obama’s signing of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act.

Rita graduated from Polk State College in 1974, completing her bachelor’s degree in Psychology at Michigan State in 1976. At this time, domestic violence had not yet been identified as a societal problem. Her first exposure to the issue was when she answered an advertisement for a “counselor,” which led to a position at a battered women’s shelter. Here she learned first-hand the lasting problems of violence in the home, making her career path clear.

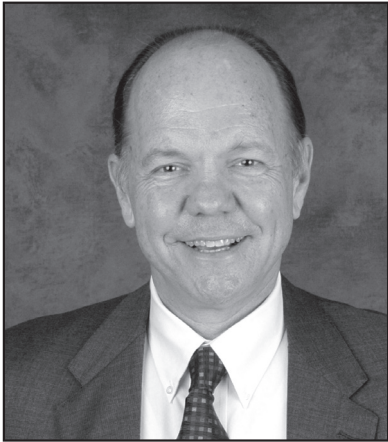
In addition to her work with the NCADV, Rita has volunteered with many domestic violence organizations, including the Peace River Center (Polk County, Florida) and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, in which she served on the State Board.

Although no longer a Polk County resident, Rita always hoped to assist in the creation of a shelter for domestic violence survivors in Winter Haven. While visiting in 2011 as a Polk State Distinguished Alumna, her passion to facilitate a shelter was renewed and she shared her ideas with Polk State President Dr. Holden. In 2012, Rita returned to the College to begin the planning process with various community leaders and organizations, and to establish the need for a shelter in this area. Rita remains actively involved with this small group.

The youngest of six children and first in her family to achieve a college education, Rita’s motivation came from her parents’ work ethic and encouragement. Rita attributes local pediatrician, Rita Marotti, and former Polk State College professors Joanne Ebert and Ann McNeer McLeod, as being strong female role models who helped her realize that she could do anything she wanted in life and provided a broader view of the world beyond Polk County.

Rita states that her greatest accomplishment is that she has helped to change lives, and often, saved lives as well. Domestic violence can face any person at any time, and her mission and efforts continue to change the world for the better.

2013 NOMINEES – LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Edwin O. Swift, III, a student from Florida Keys Community College's 1965 inaugural class, is founder and president of Historic Tours of America, Inc., the multi-million dollar, thousand employee tourism machine known as "the nation's story teller." Edwin's entrepreneurial and civic legacy serves as inspiration to entrepreneurs, history buffs, and philanthropists - and most importantly community college students.

EDWIN SWIFT
FLORIDA KEYS COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Michael Dippy graduated from Valencia College in 1989. He continued his studies at the University of Florida. He worked in the field of architecture but was drawn to a higher purpose – to help the homeless population of Central Florida. He is founder and executive director of IDignity, which helps the poor and disadvantaged obtain identification documents.

MICHAEL DIPPY
VALENCIA COLLEGE

2013 LEROY COLLINS AGAINST THE ODDS AWARD



CAROLYN ALFREDA KING
TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Presented to a Florida college alumnus who has achieved success despite financial, sociological or physical adversity. Recipients are alumni for whom the college experience has had a most direct and positive effect.

CAROLYN ALFREDA KING TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Carolyn Alfreda (Freda) King used education to help her rebound from addiction and poverty at age 36. The high school dropout earned her GED diploma and A.A. degree at Tallahassee Community College while working full-time and raising a family.

According to Freda, TCC played a vital role in her success.

“TCC helped shape my destiny. At 36 years old without a high school diploma I felt lost. When I stepped on the campus in 2000, I had no idea what my future held or if I could complete my GED. I dropped out of school at 16 years old, so there was a lot I did not know. I was welcomed with open arms by my GED professors. No one turned me away and everyone was eager to help me complete my educational journey. Once I obtained my GED, I enrolled at TCC to obtain my A.A. degree. The TCC Foundation and the Math and English lab team were my saving grace, from financial support to educational tutoring. My journey at TCC was complete in May 2007. I came to TCC weak, uneducated and unsure if I could achieve college success. I left as a woman with pride and determination, believing that I could obtain my goals and reach success. TCC helped me become the woman I am today and I will be forever grateful.”

Freda received a scholarship from TCC that allowed her to stay in school while working to support her family. She graduated with a 3.5 GPA, was student of the year in 2003, and gave

the commencement address at her graduation.

Just before she graduated magna cum laude from Florida State University in 2010, Freda’s soldier son Brandon was killed in Afghanistan. To honor him in a way that reflects the importance of education and of “giving back,” Freda created the Brandon Michael King Scholarship, which has already helped several deserving students attend TCC.

Freda now works with incarcerated adults struggling with substance abuse, trauma and a lack of hope. She is a certified addiction specialist and coordinates an educational and social service program for inmates of the Leon County Jail. The program combats recidivism by addressing inmates’ lack of employability and life skills. Freda does everything from conduct mock job interviews to teach computer skills and work on relapse prevention.

Freda is also part-time coordinator of the Dress for Success Going Places program, which engages with community partners to help women develop employability skills.

Freda volunteers her time to help others turn their lives around and reach their goals. She developed her own curriculum on life skills and healthy relationships for the group sessions she runs for inmates at the federal women’s prison in Tallahassee.

In all of these settings, Freda shares her own story and urges those who are struggling to pursue their dreams and rewrite their own story. Said Freda, “People tell me your life can’t be restored. It can.”

2013 NOMINEES – AGAINST THE ODDS AWARD



While battling a rare form of life-threatening urethral cancer, Albert J. (A.J.) Bacon, Sr., found himself in financial distress and nearly homeless before finding Gulf Coast State College. Motivated by his many hardships and GCSC's "Start here. Go anywhere!" promise, A.J. turned his challenges into assets by pursuing a career in social work and a life of community service.

ALBERT BACON
GULF COAST STATE COLLEGE

Russian native Lidia O'Shields, 29, is the recipient of SCF's Spring 2013 Outstanding Graduate Award and Image Award. Named to the Phi Theta Kappa All-Florida Academic First Team, O'Shields has been accepted into the University of Florida where she will major in Russian and French studies and minor in mathematics and Chinese with plans to become a U.S. Foreign Service officer.

LIDIA O'SHIELDS
STATE COLLEGE OF FLORIDA, MANATEE-SARASOTA





John Spence overcame academic failure to graduate from Santa Fe College and become one of the world's most sought-after executive educators and professional speakers. "Santa Fe changed my life," he said. The educational foundation John received prepared him to be one of the greatest motivators in a generation, transforming people's perceptions, enhancing economic opportunities and creating countless learning moments himself.

JOHN SPENCE
SANTA FE COLLEGE

2013 LEROY COLLINS HOMETOWN HERO AWARD



ROBERT TRAMMELL

CHIPOLA COLLEGE

This award is presented to an alumnus who has achieved a measure of success within the nominating college's district and has demonstrated notable community involvement. Recipients have expressed a clear, relevant impact of his/her college experience upon their success.

ROBERT TRAMMELL CHIPOLA COLLEGE

Some people have accused Robert Trammell of waking up in the morning thinking about Chipola College – and going to bed at night with those same thoughts on his mind. Judging from the long list of contributions he has made to his alma mater, that indeed may be true.

While serving as a Representative in the Florida House from 1987-1996, he was a champion for community colleges. Robert said, “As a community college graduate, I brought a unique perspective to the legislature. I recognized the tremendous role that community colleges play in higher education.”

He was particularly attuned to the needs of Chipola College, securing \$4.5 million for a Public Service Building, \$3 million for a Literature/Language building and \$500,000 for a Natural Science lab. He obtained funding for the renovation of the old Chipola gym into a regional arts center, and for purchasing adjacent homes for campus expansion.

Following his tenure in the legislature, for 13 years Robert served Chipola as Special Assistant for Development and Alumni Affairs. In this role, he organized many successful fundraising events – including those honoring the memory of prominent Chipola alumni through the creation of endowed scholarships in the names of Rep. Sam Mitchell, Rep. David Coley, Chipola coach Milton Johnson, Gadsden County Sheriff W. A. Woodham and Attorney John Ratzlaff.

A former Chipola basketball player, since his 1966 graduation, Robert has been the college’s number-one athletics ambassador. As president and board member of the Chipola Appreciation Club, he has taken the lead in raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to help the college’s

basketball, baseball and softball teams. He helped found Chipola’s Wild Game Dinner which featured high-profile guest speakers Bobby Bowden, Heisman Trophy-winner Charlie Ward and late Yankees owner George Steinbrenner. The Chipola Quail Calcutta is held annually at his farm. These events have funded an athletic endowment that exceeds \$1 million.

As a teacher, college basketball coach, lawyer and legislator, Robert has influenced many young people to attend Chipola. By establishing and funding scholarships – and by personally assisting students in need – he has enabled many people to receive college educations.

Among his recent endeavors was raising \$50,000 for a life-size bronze statue of legendary Chipola coach Milton H. Johnson. Robert notes that Johnson’s commitment to excellence epitomizes Chipola’s indomitable spirit of success.

Robert is quick to credit the scores of Chipola alumni and friends who have answered his calls for support. “By working together,” he said, “we’ve been able to accomplish a lot. When all is said and done, there is no greater cause.”

Chipola President Dr. Gene Prough says, “Robert has a passion for Chipola. His vision for this institution is unmatched. No one works harder to make sure Chipola’s strong traditions of excellence continue.”

Among Robert’s fondest memories of his time at Chipola was the day he met his wife Kay in a Chipola Humanities class. Their two children, Meredith and Doug, also attended Chipola.

2013 NOMINEES – HOMETOWN HERO AWARD



St. Johns River State College has “played a lifetime role” in Lori Wagner’s journey as a student, professional and humanitarian. With the encouragement of her professors and counselors, Lori developed what she considers one of life’s most important traits – perseverance. SJR State taught Lori the value in finishing what you start and never giving up on your goals.

LORI WAGNER
ST. JOHNS RIVER STATE COLLEGE

George Tomy, Superintendent of Marion County Schools and 1974 CF graduate, has committed his entire career to providing for the educational needs of students throughout Marion County. George serves as a constant, dedicated and passionate presence for the students in his district and for the numerous charitable organizations where he volunteers his time.

GEORGE TOMYN
COLLEGE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA





FSCJ graduate Dawn Lopez is a broadcast journalist who knows how to empower youth and change lives. Whether addressing a group of young girls to give them confidence, pride and responsibility, or presenting foster children in search of permanent homes in a regular TV spot, Dawn delights in making a difference and giving back to her hometown.

DAWN LOPEZ
FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

General Magistrate Geraldine Bishop represents the Fifth Judicial Circuit in Hernando County and previously served as a State of Florida attorney in Hernando. A 1981 PHCC graduate, Geraldine created several Hernando County programs to assist disadvantaged families and continues to fund PHCC scholarships to help others achieve their career goals.

GERALDINE BISHOP
PASCO-HERNANDO COMMUNITY COLLEGE



2013 LEROY COLLINS RISING STAR AWARD



CORWIN MCCAMMON

INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE

Presented to a Florida college alumnus who has begun the process of significant achievement while having demonstrated success because of the impact of his or her college experience.

CORWIN MCCAMMON

INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE

Corwin McCammon is committed to making a positive difference from his local community to national and international aid projects.

Corwin received his A.A. degree from Indian River State College with high honors, earning over 20 awards while attending IRSC. Corwin speaks highly of his education at Indian River saying, "IRSC is special to me because of the warm and friendly environment created by the professors and administrators who are committed to each student's individual success." He adds, "It's important to take advantage of as many experiences and opportunities as possible while you are in college." He certainly did.

While at IRSC, Corwin held leadership positions in student government, mentored children, volunteered at hospice, tutored fellow students and coordinated the IRSC Creative Writing contest for high school students. He was a member of the 2012 All-Florida Academic Team and received the Governor Bob Graham Distinguished Service Award. At the national level, Corwin was presented with the Outstanding Delegate Award at the National Model UN-APEC Conference in Washington D.C.

A hard-working biology major with intellectual curiosity, he worked as a paid intern at the USDA Horticultural Laboratory focusing on citrus greening and as a Research Intern at the Ocean Research and Conservation Association (ORCA), studying the toxicity levels in the Eastern Oyster. He presented his findings at a scientific symposium before leading marine biologists

and at the Florida Collegiate Honors Conference. Multi-talented, he also won first place in the state at the Honors Conference for his essay related to Zora Neale Hurston's book "Their Eyes Were Watching God."

Corwin's passion, however, is helping others and he takes action to make that happen. He took the lead role in organizing a World AIDS Day Remembrance Walk involving 300 community members and is an active Board Member for Treasure Coast AIDS Treatment and Counseling. Combining warmth and caring, Corwin founded the SpeakLove Initiative, designed to teach young people about self respect and ways to avoid destructive behavior.

Corwin received several full scholarships to attend Columbia University in New York City where he is majoring in sociology and education. During this past year, he worked at Columbia's Earth Institute on the UN Millennium Villages project which supports relief efforts in Africa. Last month, he was chosen as one of five across the country to work for the United Negro College Fund this summer as an Environmental Scholar. In addition to his full-time studies and community service activities, Corwin was recently appointed Director of Development for Children of Promise, which provides mental health counseling and enrichment for children of incarcerated parents.

Only 35 years old, Corwin has an outstanding record of achievement. With his enthusiasm, perseverance and dedication, he will build upon his accomplishments to create a better world – as a true "Rising Star."

2013 NOMINEE – RISING STAR AWARD



Therese Jeter, an aspiring physician, graduated from Daytona State College in 2006 summa cum laude. After earning an A.A. in Science at Daytona State, she continued on to earn her B.S. in Molecular Biology and Microbiology from the University of Central Florida, graduating magna cum laude. She is currently in her third year at St. George's University School of Medicine, Grenada, West Indies.

THERESE JETER
DAYTONA STATE COLLEGE

BROWARD COLLEGE
CHIPOLA COLLEGE
COLLEGE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
DAYTONA STATE COLLEGE
EASTERN FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE
EDISON STATE COLLEGE
FLORIDA GATEWAY COLLEGE
FLORIDA KEYS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE
GULF COAST STATE COLLEGE
HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE
LAKE-SUMTER STATE COLLEGE
MIAMI DADE COLLEGE
NORTH FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE
PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE
PASCO-HERNANDO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE
POLK STATE COLLEGE
ST. JOHNS RIVER STATE COLLEGE
ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE
SANTA FE COLLEGE
SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE OF FLORIDA
SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE
STATE COLLEGE OF FLORIDA, MANATEE-SARASOTA
TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
VALENCIA COLLEGE