



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **UPSTATE DIVERSITY LEADERS RECOGNIZED AT SEVENTH ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER**

**Greenville, SC – May 3, 2011** – Upstate leaders were honored Tuesday evening at the Seventh Annual Upstate Diversity Leadership Awards Dinner, which was presented by Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System and hosted by the Riley Institute® at Furman, the Greenville Chamber, Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce and Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce. This event acknowledged organizations and individuals for outstanding achievement in promoting diversity in the Upstate region of South Carolina. With more than 500 people in attendance, 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: William “Bill” T. Wylie Valued Lives Award for School Excellence,** went to **Fairforest Elementary School** of Spartanburg, SC. Fairforest Elementary School is a culturally diverse school in which over 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.

Fairforest Elementary is also involved in the community as a Michelin Challenge Education partner, where volunteers from Michelin tutor students on a weekly basis. Their continued focus on students and the community have been recognized, as Fairforest was named a National Title 1 Distinguished Schools Finalist, as well a recipient of the federal grant program with Reading is Fundamental.

**Outstanding High School Student Award**, presented by BI-LO, LLC, went to **Carla Littlejohn**, a senior student at Greenville Technical Charter High School. Carla currently serves as the chairperson for the City of Greenville Youth Commission, where she represents the youth voice of the community. Carla was elected as the first African-American 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.

**Jackeline Galvez**, a Clemson University student, was honored with the **Outstanding College Student Award**, presented by Michelin North America. Jackeline 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, Jackeline 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, Jackeline 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. Jackeline serves in the Gamma Sigma Sigma service sorority, which partners with community initiatives and service projects throughout the Upstate.

The **Outstanding Nonprofit Organization**, 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 community. Through their programs and activities, MLK's central focus lies in their mission statement, which states that "Dreams in Action Change the Future." With a diversity banquet held during the week, over 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.

**Erwin-Penland** was honored with the **Outstanding Business Award**, presented by Hughes Agency, LLC. For Erwin-Penland, having a diverse work environment is essential to a successful business. 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 and offered their support to the Upstate of South Carolina. 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 even provided pro bono support for such organizations as the Urban League and the NAACP.

Beyond the Upstate, Erwin-Penland has served as a powerful role model for diversity efforts within its industry by implementing an inclusive approach to their own marketing and advertising. For their efforts, Erwin-Penland has previously been awarded the EFFIE Award – the nation's most prestigious accolade for marketing effectiveness.

**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, Ms. Peterson has been able to have an impact on her school, her students and her community in a great way. Every day, Ms. 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, Ms. Peterson selflessly 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. Additionally, her love of community service is contagious. Under her leadership, her foreign exchange students at Greenville Tech have accumulated over 500 hours of community service in this academic year alone.

Ms. Peterson routinely volunteers to serve in local organizations such as Greenville Forward and the International Center of the Upstate. She has collaborated on a number of "Interfaith Dinners" to promote an appreciation for those of different religions and beliefs. She has worked with the Frazee Dream Center to organize an "International Day" where

children can learn games, songs and languages from all around the world. Ms. Peterson has made and will continue to make an indelible mark upon Greenville by promoting cultural understanding and a multi-layered approach to diversity in our community.

**Judith Prince**, Vice Chancellor at USC 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 over 25 years, Dr. Prince is a shining and inspirational advocate for women in the workplace and the community.

For many years, Dr. Prince has served as a role model, an inspiration and a cheerleader to the Hispanic-American Women's Association (AHAM). 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 the SC Women in Higher Education.

As a valued Rotarian in the Rotary Club of Greenville, Dr. Prince had a vision to set the course of change through her leadership with organization of a "Women for Rotary" membership initiative that included a wide-scale approach toward reaching out and retaining women members.

Judith has dedicated her life to education, women's issues and specifically helping women to advance into leadership positions in their careers. Her holistic approach is said to be three-fold: First, creating an environment that is inclusive toward women and other diversity members; Second, to ensure that the environment and its activities are appropriate for all, including skill levels and physical abilities; And finally, making a concentrated and focused effort to reach out to exemplary women and minorities in the community and personally invite them in. With her support and her enduring commitment, Dr. Prince continues to encourage women and minorities to achieve their dreams.

For more information about the Upstate Diversity Leadership Awards, please contact Cindy Youssef at the Riley Institute® at Furman at 864.294.3253.

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