



20th NCEA Seton Awards 2010

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Eight to Receive St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Award in October National Catholic Educational Association awards honor philanthropy, leadership and service to Catholic education New Orleans Catholic schools' survival skills merit President's Award

Arlington, Va.—Eight individuals will receive the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Award from the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) during the 20th annual Seton Awards ceremony Monday, Oct. 4 at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. The Archdiocese of New Orleans will receive the NCEA President's Award.

The Seton Award is NCEA's highest honor, given in recognition of significant contributions to Catholic education. The award is named in honor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821), the first native-born American saint.

This year's award recipients are:

- Donald and Michele D'Amour, Somers, Conn., major supporters of public and private education in Connecticut and Massachusetts and of Assumption College, Worcester, Mass.;
- Lee and Penny Anderson, New Brighton, Minn., major supporters to the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn., and of university humanitarian activities in Cuba and for Cuban students;
- Tom M. Benson, San Antonio, Texas, whose philanthropy has benefitted Central Catholic High School, Incarnate Word University and the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, as well as many New Orleans charities as owner of the New Orleans Saints;
- Robert A. Smith, La Canada Flintridge, Calif.; for his support of Loyola High School and Dolores Mission Parish in Los Angeles and his leadership of the Catholic Education Foundation;
- Frank and Judy Sunberg, Lilydale, Minn., for support of Cretin-Derham Hall and the University of St. Thomas, and advocacy in promoting diversity in admissions; and
- The Archdiocese of New Orleans for its leadership and success in reopening schools quickly to maintain Catholic education in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

For reservations or additional information about the Seton Awards, contact Brother Stephen Comeau at NCEA at (571) 451-2891.

The NCEA, founded in 1904, is a professional membership organization that provides leadership, direction and service to fulfill the evangelizing, catechizing and teaching mission of the church. NCEA members include elementary schools, high schools, parish religious education programs and seminaries.

Award recipient accomplishments follow:

Donald and Michele D'Amour

Don and Michele D'Amour are firmly committed to strengthening the Catholic identity of Catholic schools and colleges. Don is chairman of the board and CEO of Big Y Foods, a family-owned chain of supermarkets founded by his father in 1936 that now operates stores in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Big Y has awarded 1,800 public and parochial schools more than \$4.5 million in equipment and other support through the Education Express program. Each year Big Y awards more than 300 scholarships totaling more than \$250,000.

Michele oversees the company's Homework Help Line, which began as a phone-based, toll-free tutoring program to assist students in grades K through 12 and now includes an online component. The program has assisted more than 10,000 students.

Don has chaired the advisory board for the Diocese of Springfield, Mass., and has served on the board of Assumption College in Worchester, Massachusetts, his alma mater. Michele served for several years on the board for Springfield diocesan schools.

In 2006, the couple committed \$1.5 million to Assumption College to endow and expand the Foundations of Western Civilization Program. In 2008, they made an additional \$4.2 million gift to endow a chair in Catholic Intellectual Tradition and a distinguished speaker series in Catholic thought.

Inspired by Pope John Paul II's encyclical, "Faith and Reason," the couple founded the Fides et Ratio grants competition to assist small Catholic colleges in solidifying their Catholic identity in the curriculum, campus life and admissions process. Six colleges have received \$1.5 million in grants.

The D'Amours have endowed academic scholarships at the Catholic elementary schools they attended, established scholarships in their local parish in Hampden, Mass., for students going on to Catholic schools and established an endowment for a youth choir in their parish.

Lee and Penny Anderson

Lee Anderson is owner and chairman of APi Group, Inc., a St. Paul, Minn., holding corporation of almost 30 construction, manufacturing and fire-protection companies. The company employs more than 5,000 people at more than 100 offices, plants and warehouses in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

The Andersons have been major benefactors to the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, providing funds for scholarships at the School of Law and support for university humanitarian activities in Cuba and for Cuban students.

Lee joined the university board of trustees in 2000 and serves on the audit/finance and investment committee. He is a charter member of the university's School of Law board of governors.

In 2006, Lee and Penny announced a gift of \$60 million to the university, the largest single gift to a college or university in Minnesota history. The money will fund a new student center, an athletic and recreation complex and a parking ramp. Lee received the university's John F. Cade award for entrepreneurial excellence in 2002 and an honorary doctor of laws degree in 2005.

In 2006, the United States Military Academy, Lee's alma mater, recognized Lee with the Thomas Jefferson Award for Philanthropy. Among his many gifts to the academy and its cadets, he and Penny donated more than half of the funding for the academy's Anderson Rugby Complex.

In keeping with the couple's concern for nature conservation, the Andersons endowed the Lee and Penny Anderson Conservation Education program at the Boone and Crockett Club in Montana, which was founded in 1887 by Theodore Roosevelt and several fellow hunters and conservations. The program provides field trips, in-school presentations, teacher workshops and youth outdoor adventure camps for K through 12 teachers and students.

Tom M. Benson

Although initially Tom Benson purchased the New Orleans Saints to keep the team in the city, in the intervening years the Saints have become a revitalizing force in New Orleans. In addition to building a Super Bowl-winning organization, Tom and his family are redeveloping the New Orleans Centre, a mall adjacent to the Superdome, and have purchased an office building near the stadium that had been dormant since Hurricane Katrina. The Saints organization has been involved in many ways with the Catholic community. Players have been involved in programs and school visits and have donated generously to Catholic schools.

Beyond football, Tom is a major donor to the PACE Center, a program for all-inclusive care for the elderly, operated by Catholic Charities.

A \$14 million challenge gift from the Gayle and Tom Benson Charitable Foundation was a major boost to San Antonio Oblate School of Theology's capital campaign. The money will provide endowment support for academic programs and fund a new auditorium and classroom building.

In 2008, contributions from the foundation enabled the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio to institute an intercollegiate football program, the first for any college in San Antonio. The team began playing in 2009 in the new Gayle and Tom Benson Stadium. Tom previously endowed the Benson Chair in banking and finance in the university's school of business and administration.

Tom is a long-time supporter of Central Catholic High School in San Antonio. A recent \$4 million gift to the school enabled Central Catholic to upgrade the football stadium and to build a new athletic and convocation facility.

Tom has been in the automobile business since 1950 and has been involved in banking since the 1970s. In 2008 he acquired a New Orleans television station and formed a global media group.

Robert A. Smith

Robert "Rob" Smith is deeply involved in Catholic education. He attended Los Angeles area Catholic elementary schools and graduated from Loyola High School before attending the University of California Los Angeles, where he played on the 1962 Rose Bowl team.

Rob's father, Robert Smith II, was a founding donor of the Catholic Education Foundation. Now as president of the foundation, Rob Smith supervises a 36-member board of trustees that disburses \$11.5 million in tuition awards to 9,000 students attending Catholic primary and secondary schools in the archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Rob joined the Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation in 1981 and was elected president in 1986. The foundation oversees a \$130-million fund, which gives to many Catholic causes ranging from education, health and human services to parish life.

He serves as a trustee of Loyola High School and is involved in other Jesuit causes. He is a trustee of Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission Parish in East Los Angeles and for more than 12 years headed the Jesuit Charities Golf Tournament, which raises tuition for students at Dolores Mission Elementary School. He and his wife, Joanne, serve on the advisory board of the Dominican Sister's Vision of Hope, which staffs seven Catholic elementary schools in the poorest communities of Los Angeles.

For 15 years he taught religion classes at St. Bede the Venerable parish and over the years has worked with the Catholic Worker soup kitchen and on Cursillo weekends. He is actively involved in Detention Ministry. In 1998 he received the Cardinal's Award for outstanding service to the church of Los Angeles.

Rob is the owner of Sierra Leasing Company of Glendale, California, a car sales and leasing firm, which he has now passed along to his sons, who also are Loyola High School alumni.

Frank and Judy Sunberg

Frank Sunberg is the retired president of Portu-Sunberg Marketing, a manufacturer's representative company that distributes seasonal products, school supplies and patio furniture through more than 650 mass merchandisers and food, drug and hardware chains in the Midwest and mountain states. He also created two other companies, Seasonal Specialties in 1983 and Strategic Design in 1991. Although he has retired from active management of his companies, he still retains partial ownership in them.

Frank is a graduate of Cretin High School (now Cretin-Derham Hall) in St. Paul, Minn., and has served two terms on the school's board of directors and continues to serve on the school's investment committee. He was the lead donor to the high school's Promoting the Vision, Preserving the Values capital campaign and lead donor for the Access to Excellence matching gift initiative. He currently chairs the 1960 Cretin High School 50th reunion gift committee. He received the Bishop Joseph Cretin Distinguished Alumnus award from Cretin-Derham Hall in 2002. He also is a former board member of St. Thomas Academy High School.

Frank and Judy created a scholarship program at the University of St. Thomas to promote diversity in admissions in the belief that the university can do a better job recruiting and retaining students of color. Frank is a past member of the university's board of trustees and serves on its institutional advancement and student affairs committees and on the evening MBA board of advisors. In 1999 he received the university's John F. Cade award for entrepreneurial excellence.

The Sundbergs have been major contributors to a number of parish capital projects during the past two decades.

As cancer survivors, both Frank and Judy have spent hours comforting and counseling people living with cancer, especially at the time of the initial diagnosis.

President's Award

The President's Award to the Archdiocese of New Orleans honors the resilience and spirit of the archdiocese and its schools in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Schools in the city of New Orleans suffered the brunt of the storm damage. Almost every school in the archdiocese was affected – either damaged or impacted by the turmoil of a transient population and an uncertain future.

While New Orleans public schools declared it would take a year to reopen, some archdiocesan Catholic schools were back in operation within five weeks—sometimes in double shifts and sometimes in inventive new quarters. The archdiocese believed it was critical to reopen schools to stabilize communities, to give residents a reason to return. Parents could concentrate on their own rebuilding effort knowing that their children were being educated in a safe environment. Some schools even accommodated the children of relief workers who were living on cruise ships so that the workers could concentrate on rebuilding.

Although overall enrollment in the archdiocese is 5 percent lower than pre-storm numbers, today 86 of the former 106 archdiocesan schools are operating. There is significant growth in enrollment numbers in suburban areas where population shifts have occurred and there are waiting lists in several schools.

The archdiocese recently completed a strategic study for the future, using demographic information that indicates as much as a 25 percent population decline in the immediate New Orleans area.