

Happenings

Ampy, Young win MBL's top award a second time

They've done it again. Kenneth E. Ampy and Samuel S. Young Jr. are once again the winners of the Metropolitan Business League's top award — Entrepreneur of the Year.

They are the first repeat winners in the 20-year history of the award.

MBL selected the two men for a second consecutive year based on their 2009 achievements with their Richmond-based company Astyra Corp.

Despite the recession-battered economy, Mr. Ampy and Mr. Young posted another record year for their company, which specializes in providing computer and technology experts to do contracted projects for major corporations and the federal government.

In presenting the award, the MBL cited the company for achieving an eye-popping 40 percent growth in revenue — from around \$10 million in 2008 to around \$14 million in 2009.

Astyra also reported a 77 percent jump in the number of contract workers deployed for short-term government and business projects

Free Press saved 'Entrepreneur' name

The Metropolitan Business League presented its 2010 Entrepreneur of the Year award, confident that the name of the award would not be snatched away.

That wasn't always the case. In 2002, a gigantic accounting firm, Ernst & Young, attempted to stop the MBL from using the award name by claiming a copyright on the Entrepreneur of the Year name.

At the time, Ernst & Young presented its own Entrepreneur of the Year award in Richmond and claimed only it was entitled to use the name.

The Free Press came to the MBL's defense, editorially opposing Ernst & Young — and won.

Ernst & Young caved in to the Free Press and the MBL. Ernst & Young also ended its sponsorship of its awards program designed mostly for white-owned Richmond area businesses. Instead, those businesses are now included in competition Ernst & Young hosts for the Greater Washington, D.C., area.



Jerome Reid/Richmond Free Press

Samuel S. Young Jr., left, and Kenneth E. Ampy proudly display their latest 2010 MBL Entrepreneur of the Year Award. Mr. Young is the president and Mr. Ampy is the CEO of Richmond-based Astyra Corp., a provider of contract technology workers.

— from 200 workers assigned to projects in eight states in 2008 to 354 on assignment in 11 states in 2009.

"They deserved the award. Astyra had its best year ever despite the challenging economy," said Oliver R. Singleton, president and CEO of the MBL, which was founded more than 40 years ago in Jackson Ward to support and promote black businesses.

"Unexpected," Mr. Ampy, who serves as CEO, told a reporter after he and Mr. Young received the award Saturday night during the MBL awards reception at the Science Museum of Virginia.

"We're proud and humbled by the recognition," Mr. Young, who serves as president, said following the presentation by Penny Johnson, Richmond area vice president and senior community development officer for Wachovia bank.

The two men were the only employees when they started the company in 1997 after graduating from Old Dominion University, where they had been roommates. Currently they have a staff of 18 people.

Other awards presented during the reception:

Chairman's Award: Boss Chi Catering, an eight-year-old company owned and operated by Gary Boss and Chima Ugorgi. The company now serves 60,000 meals a week at such sites as Maymont, Saint Paul's College and its own Marshall Street Café in Jackson Ward. The award recognizes a company that has distinguished itself.

League Leadership Award: Ronald P. Powell Jr., CEO of HCA Central Atlantic Supply Chain, for increasing business diversity. That includes his decision to halt and rebid a \$26 million expansion of Henrico Doctor's Hospital last year, boosting contracts to minority- and women-owned companies from less than 1 percent to more than 19 percent. The award recognizes a person who has shown exceptional commitment to business fairness.

Trailblazer Award: Gerald Burr Jr., owner of general contracting firm Canterbury Enterprises of Chester, and Sharon Rheinhardt of construction giant W.J. Jordan Company of Newport News. The award recognized the firms for creating a mentoring relationship that has enabled Canterbury to gain major contracts, such as renovation of the Oscar Stovall public housing apartments on South Side.

Vision of Excellence Award: MeadWestvaco Corp., a paper and packaging company now based in Downtown. The company was cited for including minority firms in the development of its recently opened \$105 million riverfront headquarters and increasing overall spending with minority firms by 25 percent in 2009. Regina Edwards, company director of global supply chain diversity, and Timothy Wright, company manager of supplier diversity, accepted the award, which recognizes a company for spending time and resources to promote business diversity.

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PROC Beautillion

2009 Beautillion Participants

The Professionals Reaching out to the Community (PROC) Foundation, Incorporated is currently accepting applications for its 2010 Beautillion. All male high school sophomores and juniors are welcome to submit an application. The "Beaux" will participate in community service projects, social etiquette classes and leadership development workshops. The culmination of the Beautillion Season will be a formal presentation of the young men at an elegant black-tie affair on November 20, 2010 at the Richmond Convention Center. In addition to cultural and educational activities, participants will have an opportunity to earn scholarships and prizes.

An Information Session will take place on Sunday, February 28, 2010 beginning at 3pm in the Fellowship Hall of Holy Rosary Catholic Church located at 33rd and R Streets. To obtain an application or additional information, please contact Mrs. Brenda Foster at (804) 740-6162 or www.procfoundation.org. The deadline to submit an application is March 28, 2010.

Professionals Reaching Out to the Community (PROC) Foundation, Inc. is a not-for-profit, non-stock corporation of the Pi Rho Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

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