

YourLIFE

ADVICE 15
PUZZLES 16
BRIDES 18-19

SECTION 1

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2009

THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

CORRUPTION IN BUSINESS BENEFIT GLITTER IN THE NIGHT

THE SUNDAY PROFILE: YWCA TRIBUTE AWARDS MAKING AN IMPACT

THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

There's Michigan cherry chutney on the menu, but that's not why 900 people pack DeVos Place on a November weekday.

They come to be part of the palpable power of women.

Another packed house is expected at noon Wednesday for the YWCA Tribute Awards, when the YWCA West Central Michigan honors six outstanding local women and a remarkable student.

Luncheon-goers walk out inspired

by the passion and contributions of the honored women, plus there's a bonus: They made a difference, too, because Tribute is among the YWCA's biggest fundraising events of the year. Last year's event, attended by 900, brought in \$85,000 for YWCA programs, including domestic crisis, sexual assault programs, child sexual abuse treatment services, child care and health programs.

Cost is \$50 per person. Some seats still may be available. Reservations are required by 5 p.m. Monday. Call 459-4681 or register online at ywcawcmi.org.

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Shelley Padnos



Pamela Wells



Carol Johnson



Sara Smolenski



Leslie Cameron Curry



Storee Harris



Stephanie Painter



PRESS PHOTO/MARK COPIER

BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, INDUSTRY AND LABOR:

SHELLEY PADNOS

Job/profession: Executive vice president and chief administrative officer of Louis Padnos Iron and Metal

Inspiration: What inspires me is the opportunity to do better and to improve.

Life lesson: I am fortunate to have been born into the family I was born into, and that was just the luck of the draw.

Vision: I would love to retire and spend my time divided between travel and volunteering. Until now, most of my volunteer work is more at the board level, but I think I would like to try something a little more hands-on. For example, I happened to sit next to a woman during Bill Seidman's memorial. (He was a

former chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and a founder of Grand Valley State University.) She had flown in from Washington, D.C., that day. She told me, (for) the last four years, Bill Seidman had been a mentor to her. She talked about how much of a difference he made in her life. I thought that was pretty inspiring. Last, I would like to go most anywhere in the world, and I would like to do the more difficult ones before they're physically too demanding.

Rule to live by: I live by a lot of rules, but the overriding rule is to try very hard to treat others the way I would want to be treated.

Personal challenge: The biggest challenge I've had

to deal with is trying to have the The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, also known as the Superfund, enacted so recycling would be treated differently than waste. It was a huge issue in our industry, and it took more than 10 years working with Congress to do it, but I was part of the group that worked on it for the entire 10 years. I was lucky enough to be able to sit in the Senate chambers when the legislation finally passed.

What makes you laugh: (Chief Judge of the 63rd District Court) Sara Smolenski makes me laugh. Nobody does stories and jokes better than Sara.

— Paul R. Kopenkosky

I would love ... to find a way between travel and volunteering.

— Shelley Padnos

COMMUNITY SERVICE: SARA SMOLENSKI

Job/profession: Chief judge, Kent County 63rd District Court

Inspiration: My mother. Without sounding corny, it's not just because I lost my mother a year ago July, but I think of my mother, who raised 10 children, as really the most strong, most courageous person I knew. She was very practical, very smart, a wonderful role model. She was the kind of person who made every one of her 10 children feel like sometimes they were the only one.

Life lesson: Believe in yourself. I guess that follows along with "Be yourself." It doesn't matter if you're 22 or 42 or 52.

Vision: My vision is to help others who can't help themselves. Speak out for the underserved. Be a voice when there is no voice, or when the voice is not heard.

Rule to live by: There are so many good ones: Be courteous. Be respectful. Be honest. Every one of us likes to be treated with respect and courtesy.

My vision is ... to help others who can't help themselves. Speak out for the underserved. Be a voice when there is no voice, or when the voice is not heard.

— Sara Smolenski

Really, (common courtesy) is vital.

Personal challenge: Remaining strong during difficult times. The past few years have probably been some of my most difficult: losing my mom, my brother, an aunt, an uncle, my best friend's dad. Death changes you. And things at work have been a challenge more than in the past. Focus on your strengths to move forward in a positive way.

What makes you laugh: My mother ... knew I was active in the community, and when I started doing my comedy, she



PRESS PHOTO/EMILY ZOLADZ

said to me, "When you're through, get off the stage." My mother knew what kind of a ham I was. But she wanted to let me know, "You did your thing, you're

done, get off the stage and let someone else take over." It's good advice.

— Morgan Jarema

STUDENT/JUDY LLOYD LEADERSHIP:

STOREE HARRIS



PRESS PHOTO/EMILY ZOLADZ

Job: Creston High School senior

Inspiration: My family. I have a lot of supportive people who push me to do my best, but they let me know it's OK to fall short sometimes. Also, people who look up to me as a role model, young girls or parents who tell me their kids look up to me. Hearing that inspires me to watch what I do and what I say.

Life lesson: I had to learn that I'm my own worst critic. Some people have high standards for me, but my standards are the highest. I have to learn not to be so critical of myself.

Vision: To impact the world in a positive way to some degree. If I'm able to help even one person, then they can help another.

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— Storee Harris

Rule to live by: What you put into life is what you get out. I work really hard for the things I want to achieve. I've cried and cried just trying to get As, been up all night studying, and now I'm reaping the rewards. People think I'm given As, but I have to work for those. Nothing has been given to me.

Personal challenge: Not to stress out. I stress about everything. It's difficult for me to not worry about the smallest things. I try to think ahead, take things day by day, try not to take on too much at once.

What makes you laugh: My friends and my family. I see a lot of funny things in observing other people and how they interact.

— Morgan Jarema

ADVOCACY: LESLIE CAMERON CURRY

Job/profession: Litigation director, Legal Aid of Western Michigan

Inspiration: (I have) many, including those equal-justice pioneers of the past who fought for civil rights with a passion and courage I am humbled by; my clients, who, in the face of the desperation and indignities of poverty, exhibit grit, tenacity, dignity and sometimes heroism; my colleagues, for sharing the challenge, for successfully balancing anger at unfairness and cynicism about whether anything ever changes with kindness and intelligence; and for all the food, babies and dogs brought to our office, (and) my family — how lucky can you get? A husband and best friend of 31 years, two kids I adore and admire, three great stepchildren and five stepgrandchildren to keep life fun, always-supportive parents, and three fascinating siblings.

Life lesson: Life is fragile and unfair, but achingly beautiful. Be appreciative.

Vision: At Legal Aid, our goal is to provide high-quality legal representation to people with low incomes. To me, this means valuing our clients — by respecting them and trying to force society to respect them, by giving them a meaningful voice in courts and agencies, by striving toward temporary equality and establishing patterns toward longer term balances of power and by just solving problems for people so life isn't so hard.

Rule to live by: Speak truth to power, but be thoughtful and tolerant; don't think about yourself too much. Read lots of good books and experience and support the arts whenever



PRESS PHOTO/KATY GATDORFF

possible; ally yourself with progressive causes in your community.

Personal challenge: To live a life with purpose, generosity and balance.

What makes you laugh: My colleagues, every day. Thanks for this nomination and for sharing this crazy journey.

— Morgan Jarema

Life is fragile and unfair, but achingly beautiful. Be appreciative.

— Leslie Cameron Curry

SPORTS, FITNESS AND WELLNESS:

STEPHANIE PAINTER

Job/profession: Spectrum Health director of School Health Programs

Inspiration: What inspires me and keeps me going is I feel I'm doing the right thing for the right reasons. My life's mission is to love the Lord God with all my heart, mind, soul and strength and to love my neighbors as myself. I find great joy in working with other people in accomplishing that mission

Life lesson: I've learned there's a difference between a dreamer and a visionary. A dreamer has no one to work with. I've been very blessed to work with people who are visionaries, principals, teachers and parents, who made a commitment to follow through with that vision.

Vision: Love is an action word. Love is not just a feeling, but is connected to the heart, mind, soul and strength. Strength means doing things when they're hard, persevering even when you're not recognized as doing the right thing and trying to do it anyway. I had

a co-worker who kept telling me to keep my eye on the ball, keep in mind what's important for the health of children.

Rule to live by: Embedded in my life's mission is the whole concept of loving the Lord God with your whole mind, soul and strength

Personal challenge: I'm still learning to be more realistic in my expectations of God and myself and other people, especially when things don't seem fair or right, or I don't understand them. I continue to learn how to handle that kind of disappointment. I try to learn to be patient and really recognize what my responsibilities and limitations are and trust God and believe he's in control.

What makes you laugh: It always has something to do with children. My granddaughter makes me laugh a lot. I like practical jokes. I won't admit to anything I've done. I'm always the little naive victim.

— Paul R. Koppenkoskey

I've been very blessed to work with people who are visionaries."

— Stephanie Painter



PRESS PHOTO/ADAM BIRD

PROFESSIONS: PAMELA WELLS

Job/profession: Principal of C.A. Frost Environmental Science Academy in Grand Rapids

Inspiration: I was blessed to have many positive adults in my life who always saw and celebrated my potential.

Life lesson: I went through the death of a student many years ago. And although I like to "fix" things, the disease that ravaged her body could not be fixed. I could only be there to laugh, cry, hope and finally to say goodbye. Sometimes as adults we don't need to fix anything — we just need to be there.

Vision: I want our students and families to know that there is nothing more important than education. It will lift you up. It will change your circumstance. My vision is for every student of C.A. Frost to find that special someone that they have a personal connection with — and it's happening.

Rule to live by: Never do anything to dampen or crush the human spirit. Work to

serve, honor and celebrate others for the many ways they enrich your life.

Personal challenge: Trying to meet the needs of so many kids in such little time with so few resources. Human needs, for all students, are the same: Love, fun, freedom, attention. People always ask me, "Haven't kids' needs changed over the years?" The needs haven't changed. What's different now is they aren't being met.

What makes you laugh: Kids, kids, kids. Example: A middle school student discussing tattoos, piercings and wild hair color didn't like my answers. She put her hands on her hips and walked away, saying, "Boy, Ms. Wells, you sure are acting old today." Or the kindergartner who asked me, "Ms. Wells, is you married?" To which I replied, "No." And he said, "Why — don't nobody love you?" (She is engaged to be married to Tom Marcusse, who "gets what I do and who I am. Go figure!")

— Terri Finch Hamilton



PRESS PHOTO/JON M. BROUWER

Sometimes as adults we don't need to fix anything — we just need to be there."

— Pamela Wells

ARTS: CAROL JOHNSON

Job/profession: Artist/private-practice art therapist

Inspiration: What really inspires me is seeing people who want to make a difference in their lives in a more positive way. That's when I get inspired because I know change is possible. As an art therapist, I have seen in the past where lives have been turned around, and new and wonderful things have happened. It doesn't just change a person, it may be changing families and maybe generations.

Life lesson: The visual arts have a way of speaking to people even though they don't speak the same language. It can give us positive feelings. The visuals can convey a lot of emotion and can cause us to move and act and come together as nations.

Vision: The best way I can serve others is by using the arts to assist people through the use of visuals and other creative processes.

Rule to live by: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Remember to stay on the positive side of life.

Personal challenge: When apartheid was going on in South Africa, I saw many of the images of the struggle of young people that were the same age as my children. I kept thinking it could have been my children. I did a series on it and used apartheid to express some of the trauma these individuals were experiencing.

What makes you laugh: Seeing the funny side of life.

— Paul R. Koppenkoskey



PRESS PHOTO/LORI MIEDENFUEHL COOL

The visual arts have a way of speaking to people even though they don't speak the same language. It can give us positive feelings. The visuals can convey a lot of emotion and can cause us to move and act and come together as nations.

— Carol Johnson

YWCA honors women while raising \$70,000

Fundraising match announced at luncheon

THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

GRAND RAPIDS -- YWCA programs for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child sexual abuse will benefit from a \$10,000 match challenge announced at the organization's annual Tribute to Women.

The fundraising luncheon Wednesday honored six community leaders and one outstanding student for their work.

This year's event raised about \$70,000 for YWCA West Central Michigan programs, compared with about \$85,000 last year and \$80,000 in 2007.

New gifts, and those from donors who did not give in 2008 or 2009 will be eligible in their entirety, up to \$1,000. An



increase in the 2008 amount up to \$1,000 also qualifies.

Those honored at DeVos Place included:

- Advocacy: Leslie Cameron Curry, litigation director, Legal Aid of Western Michigan.
- Arts: Carol Johnson, artist

and an art therapist.

- Business, management, industry and labor: Shelley Padnos, executive vice president and chief administrative officer of Louis Padnos Iron and Metal.
- Community service: Sara Smolenski, chief judge, Kent



PRESS PHOTOS/EMILY ZOLADZ

Congratulations: C.A. Frost Environmental Science Academy Principal Pamela Wells, above right, hugs her fiance, Tom Marcusse, after receiving her YWCA Tribute award Wednesday at DeVos Place. At left, Carol Johnson, local artist, educator and social worker, right, hugs YWCA Chairwoman Ellen James while receiving her award.

- County 63rd District Court.
- Professions: Pamela Wells, principal of C.A. Frost Environmental Science Academy.
- Sports, fitness and wellness: Stephanie Painter, Spectrum Health director of school health programs.

- Student and Judy Lloyd Leadership awards: Storee Harris, Creston High School senior.
- "This is an opportunity to recognize women who otherwise would be unsung heroes," said Carla Blinkhorn, president and CEO of the YWCA West Central Michigan. "Despite the

economy, there is strong support for putting this spotlight on women. The same sponsors came in, maybe not all at the same level, and this challenge grant gives us an opportunity to balance in many areas."

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