



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 22, 2010**

**Hempstead For Hofstra/Hofstra For Hempstead To Host  
36<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholarship Dinner**

**The 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Hempstead for Hofstra/Hofstra for Hempstead Scholarship Dinner will honor six community leaders for their service on Thursday, April 8, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the Main Dining Room of the Sondra and David S. Mack Student Center, North Campus.**

**For more than three decades the scholarship dinner has celebrated and cemented the bond between the University and the Village of Hempstead while raising money to help Village students attend Hofstra. The highlight of the event is presentation of the Unispan Awards which are named for the first pedestrian bridge over Hempstead Turnpike connecting Hofstra's North and South Campuses.**

**"We look for people who have made significant contributions to the community" said George Sandas, chairman of the dinner committee. "This year's group – you couldn't ask to honor better people. They are all just good people with good solid Hempstead roots."**

**This year the Unispan Awards will be given to:**

**Ronald Bekoff, founding member of Hession, Bekoff, Cooper and LoPicollo, LLP, a litigation attorney, is one of the most respected members of Nassau and Suffolk County's Criminal Defense Bar Associations. He has been a commentator on Court TV and on News 12 Long Island during the People vs Colin Ferguson trial. A graduate of Hempstead High School, he lectures to students about the criminal justice system; represents Hempstead youth pro bono; is active in Hempstead athletics and in 1993 assisted Donald Ryan, coach of the Hempstead Salvation Army Biddy Basketball Team which won an international tournament in Helsinki, Finland.**

**Jean Bligen, principal of the Barack Obama Elementary School, began her career with her first teaching position in the Hempstead School District where she now serves. She believes that it is her responsibility to motivate her staff to insure that the children in her school are provided with an interactive, motivating and nurturing environment that promotes social, emotional and intellectual growth. She holds two Masters Degrees and is the recipient of awards and citations for her outstanding work in education as a teacher and administrator.**

**Brandon Michael Cruz earned a full scholarship to study law at St. John's, received his Juris Doctorate in 1007, joined the Bongiorno Law firm the same year, and was made partner at the age of 28 just four years later. He has assisted the African American Museum in Hempstead, is a regular sponsor of charitable events including the Nassau County Police Department Gun Stoppers program and Freeport's Adopt-a-Cop program. His philanthropic work has been recognized by Hempstead, Freeport and Nassau County.**

**Steven Mills, consultant to Magic Johnson Enterprises was born and raised in the Village of Hempstead. He has enjoyed a twenty six year career in the sports entertainment industry, rising from an entry level job with the NBA to Executive Vice President of the New York Knicks, to President and COO of MSG Sports, reestablishing Madison Square Garden as the "Mecca of Boxing" and returning professional tennis to the Garden. He is an alumnus of Princeton University where he teaches a course in "Dilemmas in Athletics". He has served as a mentor to the Hempstead Bidy Basketball Team providing transportation and tickets to major sporting events.**

**Charles Renfroe, President of the Board of Education of the Hempstead Public Schools started his career with the District as a PTA parent. His professional career began in 1980 and stretched twenty five years until his retirement in 2006 after which he was elected to the school board and has served as president since that date. He has a Master's Degree in Facilities, owns and is president of Redeana Maintenance Services, Inc. and is a deacon at Judea Baptist Church in Hempstead. Four of his five children graduated from the Hempstead School system and are enrolled in college.**

**John J. Senko, Jr. owner of Hempstead Funeral Home and Senko Funeral Home is also Chairman of the Nassau County Civil Service Commission. The focal point of his firm's philosophy is integrating multiculturalism into his end-if-life services. He has been selected to conduct national and international services and is an active communicant with traditional religions as well as emerging religious models. He has responded to recent disasters in Central America, Europe and the Pacific Rim providing financial assistance and equipment to create final resting places. A daughter and granddaughter are alumnae of Hofstra University.**

**To make a reservation or donate to the scholarship fund, call 516-463-5339.**

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