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**September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month**

**THE PROSTATE NET'S 1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL "IN THE KNOW"  
AWARDS FOR ELIMINATING HEALTH DISPARITIES**

Corporate website: [www.ProstateNet.org](http://www.ProstateNet.org)

Patient website: [www.TheProstateNet.com](http://www.TheProstateNet.com), 1.888.477.6763

**NEW YORK, NY** – September 10, 2005 – The Prostate Net's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual 'In the Know' Awards for Eliminating Health Disparities honored health, business and government leaders who work tirelessly as advocates to change inequalities within medically underserved or minority communities. The power breakfast and awards ceremony was held Friday, September 9, 2005 at New York University's Kimmel Center for University Life in Manhattan.

Honorees were selected for their demonstrated leadership, implementation of novel strategies and/or commitment in time, energy and resources toward the elimination of health disparities among people of color – including prostate cancer, heart disease, diabetes and obesity. The awards ceremony was sponsored by Celgene Corporation.

"In the Know Awards" were presented to: **Congressman Robert Menendez** – National Government (New Jersey); **Dr. Eric Whitaker** – Local Government (Illinois); **Ms. Mary Goss Robino** – Corporate (California); **Maya Angelou Research Center on Minority Health** – Medical Center (North Carolina, Mr. Jeffrey Swaim accepting); **Mr. Lawrence McRae** – Community Leader (Alabama) ; **Public Health Television** – Educational Technology (Ohio, Dr. Wornie Reed accepting); **Mr. Craig Atkins** – Barber Advocate (Illinois); **Ms. Beth Kobliner-Shaw** – Family Advocacy (New York); **Mr. Robert Samuels** – Lifetime Advocacy (Florida); and **Mr. Clifton Leaf** – Excellence in Journalism (New York). Honoree biographies follow.

Program participants included: Virgil H. Simons, Founder & President, The Prostate Net, and prostate cancer survivor; Clifton Leaf, Senior Editor-at-Large, FORTUNE Magazine, Master of Ceremonies; The Honorable Adolfo Carrion, Jr., Bronx Borough President, City of New York, who offered remarks and a proclamation in commemoration of the "In the Know Awards"; Allen McFarlane, Assistant Vice President for Diversity & Student Community Development, New York University; and Alfonso Wyatt, Vice President, Fund for the City of New York.

Since 1995, The Prostate Net has kept men and their families "in the know," continuing their leadership role in community health advocacy regarding prostate cancer and other important health issues via aggressive public education, early detection, treatment programs and support systems. The Prostate Net is a 501(c)3 educational corporation and provides "the means to cope, until there is a cure." Other national programs include "**Going to the Barbershop to Fight Prostate Cancer**," "**Wired Barbershops**" interactive neighborhood kiosks and "**The Knowledge Net**" grassroots health education campaigns. To learn more, visit [www.TheProstateNet.com](http://www.TheProstateNet.com), which currently reaches over 50 countries, generates in excess of 433,000 hits/month, and because of the content provided is linked from nearly 300 other organizations to provide benefit to their viewers.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: BIOGRAPHIES FOLLOW

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## **Congressman Robert Menendez** **U.S. House of Representatives**

### ***National Government***

In his seventh term in the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Bob Menendez represents New Jersey's 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. He serves as Chairman of the Democratic Caucus and is the 3<sup>rd</sup> ranking Democrat in the House, *the highest ranking Hispanic in Congressional history*, the only Hispanic ever elected to a leadership position, in either chamber, by either party and is the youngest member of the elected Democratic Leadership. During the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, his nationally-recognized leadership earned him appointments as Chairman of both the Democratic Task Forces on Education and Homeland Security.

His commitment to the health of America is evidenced through his sponsorship and successful legislative guidance that resulted in passage of the *Patient Navigator Act*. Sponsored by Menendez and signed into law in June, *it is now easier for Americans to access health care by providing patients with an advocate at their side to help them navigate through today's complicated health care system*. The new law will also improve access to prevention screening. The Jersey City Family Health Center is the site of a patient navigator pilot program, which has screened over 1,500 patients and navigated more than 300.

“This legislation will make it easier for families throughout the country to access affordable health care,” Menendez said. “With the cost of health care rising every day, Americans are clamoring for solutions that will help them get the quality health care they need from a costly, complicated system.”

## **Dr. Eric E. Whitaker** **Director, Illinois Department of Public Health**

### ***Local Government***

In his position as Director, Illinois Department of Public Health, Dr. Eric E. Whitaker supervises an agency with more than 1,100 employees who are responsible for protecting the state's 12.4 million residents and visitors. While remaining true to his roots and commitment to the community, Dr. Whitaker has *increased direct funding to local and grass roots community organizations that have a history and commitment of service to the less fortunate and disadvantaged*. Further, he has made it a priority to assure that there was specific funding to address the disproportionate impact of prostate cancer in African American men and has support similar efforts for other groups.

Prior to 2003, Dr. Whitaker was an attending physician in Internal Medicine at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, Chicago and a member of the hospital's Collaborative Research Unit, where his research interests included HIV/AIDS prevention and minority health. In 1998, recognizing the need to develop a culturally sensitive and appealing program for African American men, he helped found the nationally acclaimed “*Project Brotherhood*.” Housed in Woodlawn Adult Health Center on Chicago's south side, this program continues to provide much-needed services and includes novel approaches such as using free haircuts to entice men to avail themselves of clinic services. The project received the National Association of Public Hospital and Health Systems' highest award in 2000.

In 1991, while serving as national president of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), Dr. Whitaker testified before the U.S. Congress regarding national health insurance and minority health issues. He also helped found an organization similar to the AMSA for the European Union's medical schools in Brussels, Belgium.

## Mary Goss Robino Senior Vice President, Global Marketing Partnerships, Sony Pictures

### *Corporate Vision*

Mary Goss Robino's personal integrity, vision and corporate clout as an award-winning film marketer provided the leadership for Hollywood to take a historic step: **use cinema to address a minority health issue – prostate cancer awareness.**

Themed **“Going to the Barbershop to Fight Cancer,”** the health awareness campaign urged men to get checked for prostate cancer and coincided with MGM's February 2004 release of the movie **BarberShop 2 Back in Business.** The results: **promotional awareness motivated 10,000 Black and Latino men to be screened for prostate cancer and other health issues, such as heart disease, hypertension and diabetes; galvanized medical centers and local community support;** as well as a bottom-line payoff in increased ticket revenue.

"Mary is a leader in her field -- a skilled, creative marketer with both strategic and tactical expertise," said Gerry Rich, President, Worldwide Theatrical Marketing for MGM Distribution Co. "Those assets, combined with her keen understanding of the promotional needs of corporate America, will contribute greatly to our marketing efforts."

Goss Robino currently serves as Senior Vice President, Global Marketing Partnerships for Sony Pictures. Her experience includes senior executive posts with New Line Cinema, where she effectively secured major promotional partnerships for global concerns and contributed to the success of the company's most successful films.

## Maya Angelou Research Center on Minority Health Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center

### *Medical Center*

The long held dream of Richard H. Dean, M.D., the President and CEO of Wake Forest University Health Sciences, the Maya Angelou Research Center was created because, **“Equality in health cannot be assumed. It must be accomplished.”**

The University describes the Center as enabling **“a new collaborative relationship between academic medicine and the delivery of health care in the community.”** The leaders of the Center recognize the urgent need to close the health gap between minorities and the rest of the United States' population. Employing a unique, pragmatic approach, the Center does not view health and disease solely as biologic occurrences, rather as mental and physical consequences of underlying behavioral, social and cultural phenomena. Forging partnerships with grassroots organizations in the African American, Hispanic and Native American communities, the Center has as a focal point improving the health literacy of the residents in these communities. This knowledge will empower these citizens to improve their own health behaviors and become more informed and assertive health care consumers.

Topics covered range from well baby care and household safety to cancer screening and prevention in culturally appropriate and linguistically responsive programs. The Center also conducts minority health research, develops mechanisms for translating findings into improved care, promotes career advancement for minorities in biomedical sciences and health care professions and sponsors a symposia to share the knowledge gained through its programs.

**Using a practical approach, the Center gives minority health consumers the knowledge and tools necessary to improve their own health and the system's responsiveness to their unique needs.** These activities serve as replicable models to other states to improve the health status of ethnic Americans.

## Lawrence W. McRae President & CEO, McRae Prostate Cancer Awareness Foundation

### *Community Leader*

Lawrence W. McRae has provided exceptional service to the residents of 11 Black Belt counties in the State of Alabama. His contributions include unrelenting effort promote prostate health in order to eradicate the disparity in the prostate cancer death rate between whites and minorities in the targeted communities.

A 69-years-young retired county government employee, Lawrence has become affectionately known as **“The Prostate Man.”** Over the past five years, he has done more to raise the consciousness level with regard to prostate health than any other individual or organization in the served areas. He has earned the respect of the community where he resides and ***speaks to men about prostate health wherever he meets them: on street corners, in barber shops, in churches, in supermarkets, everywhere!*** Lawrence has shown an uncanny ability to connect with at-risk men and their families and to get them involved in taking responsibility for their own health.

He is credited with ***individually distributing more than 5,000 pieces of educational literature, participating in 25 health fairs, 5 seminars and workshops, sponsoring awareness and prevention classes, recruiting over 500 men for participation in prostate cancer program initiatives, hosting, creating and managing a web site;*** and volunteering his time, resources and expertise on how to reach those who would benefit most from the services offered by other organizations.

Lawrence serves as an avid promoter of the Health People 2010 Initiative (a national program) in the local area. In 2000, he founded the McRae Prostate Cancer Awareness Foundation (MPCAF), a non-profit 501 (c)3 educational foundation in 2000.

## Public Health Television

### *Educational Technology*

With the support of a Small Business Innovation Research grant from the National Cancer Institute, Cleveland-based Public Health Television (PHTV, Inc.) has developed a unique model for cancer outreach to take aim at the fact that African Americans have approximately a 30% greater chance of dying from cancer than white Americans.

The new model utilizes ***a two-pronged approach to attack health disparities from both the perspective of public education and provider education.*** The registered Urban Cancer Project was a collaborative effort between PHTV, the comprehensive Cancer Center of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, and the residents of Cleveland’s public housing community. The purpose was to design and test the effectiveness of a video-based campaign to address three top issues related to cancer survival – screening, clinical trials participation, and the cultural competency of physicians who care for minority patients.

Producers conducted 44 focus groups with African American residents of Cleveland’s public housing estates to ***gain an understanding of the fears and ethnomedical beliefs*** held by some low-income African Americans regarding the healthcare system and cancer treatment. Part of this material was used to produce ***a cultural competency training tape for physicians who found it very useful for their medical practice.*** PHTV also used its culturally specific production process to produce a ***television awareness campaign,*** broadcast on Cleveland’s ABC affiliate station, generating widespread community involvement and response. The award-winning program was presented at the 2003 legislative conference of the Congressional Black Caucus as a national model for health outreach.

## **Craig Atkins** **Owner, Harper Avenue Barbershop**

### ***Barber Advocate***

Ordinary people can have an extraordinary impact. When Chicago's Rush Medical Center joined The Prostate Net's national effort with barbershops in the battle against prostate cancer, Craig Atkin's Harper Avenue Barbershop was the first to sign on. Craig directed health professionals to other barbers in the area, encouraged them to sign up, and was a key to the program's local growth and overall success. Thanks to Craig, ***most of his customers – who had never been tested for prostate cancer -- have now been screened. The good news is, no one has prostate cancer!***

Craig's barbershop has been featured as the backdrop for medical center videos on prostate cancer and he has enthusiastically participated in every initiative, including television and newspaper interviews and the promotion of health fairs and other programs. ***Known as a "community rock and role model," his shop has become the standard by which others are measured*** throughout the Midwest and beyond.

When asked what he likes about the barber business, Craig is quick to tell you, "When you're in a neighborhood and around people you like, it's really not work." Harper Avenue Barbershop has been in the same location for 40 years and is a neighborhood institution. As soon as you walk through the door you feel welcome, and sense the family-friendly atmosphere he and other barbers have worked hard to maintain. Craig also happens to be the barber of Todd Stroger, son of elected official John Stroger, a prominent Chicago Alderman. As President of the Cook County Board, the elder Stroger is also a prostate cancer survivor. This relationship has evolved into an effective government-community partnership, expanding the impact and influence of the neighborhood barbershop.

## **Beth Kobliner-Shaw** **Investment Education, Retirement Security, Pension & Health Policy Advisor**

### ***Family Advocacy***

No one experiences cancer alone. ***For each person facing a diagnosis of cancer, standing with them is a spouse or partner, children or siblings, friends and co-workers***, all of whom are dependent on the patient for fulfillment of dreams, maintenance of lifestyle, etc.

For Beth Kobliner-Shaw, her father's 1996 diagnosis and treatment for prostate cancer was a call to action to ***help make the decisions*** to save his life and keep him in hers. The specter of cancer had already touched Beth's family through her husband's multiple experiences with it, which helped to lay the foundation for dealing with her father's disease. Though Beth's father was aware of the disease's risks and was committed to beating it, Beth took the lead in ***helping to decipher the medical jargon, charting a path through the conflicting opinions for treatment and mobilizing the rest of her family*** to support the choice that had to be made. She realized that she was a daughter, but understood ***the role women play in getting the right messages heard by the patient and his support group***. Beth, her brother and other family members formed "***Team Kobliner***" as they rallied to marshal their collective resources to fight the beast that is cancer.

Beth's personal experiences led to work increasing government, corporate and philanthropic interest in the cause. In addition to being active in the Prostate Cancer Foundation (formerly known as CaPCURE), the National Prostate Cancer Coalition and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center Advisory Board, she lobbied federal officials including President Bill Clinton and members of Congress about Department of Defense funding issues for prostate cancer research and increasing the general budget of the National Cancer Institute.

According to the Prostate Cancer Foundation's annual report, Kobliner's work has been ***"instrumental in bringing about a 25-fold increase in government funding, ensuring the advancement of prostate cancer research."***

## **Robert Samuels** **Founder, Florida Prostate Cancer Network**

### *Lifetime Advocacy*

Bob Samuels has *devoted the past 11 years of his life to minority health awareness in an effort to “pay rent” to the community he lives in and to make it a better place for his fellow man. His contributions exemplify a true commitment of time, energy and personal sacrifice to support prostate cancer and wellness for ethnic communities throughout the nation.*

Bob survived both prostate cancer (1994), throat cancer (1999) as well as a number of other health challenges. Wanting to share what he learned, *he founded a variety of health advocacy organizations* including the *Tampa Bay Men’s Cancer Task Force* (1994) and the *National Prostate Cancer Coalition* (1996). In 1997, he was appointed to the *National Cancer Institute’s Prostate Cancer Progress Review Group*, served on the *U.S. Army’s Prostate Cancer Research Panel* and was appointed to the *Florida Prostate Cancer Task Force* (1998).

The *Florida Prostate Cancer Network, which he founded in 1998, is a model prostate cancer state coalition* recognized by a number of agencies including the Florida Legislature, Florida Department of Health and Florida Agency for Healthcare Administration. *In 2004, he was instrumental in enacting the Florida Prostate Cancer Awareness Act. That same year, he facilitated a joint venture between Moffitt Cancer Center and Florida A & M University (FAMU) in obtaining a \$1 Million Department of Defense grant to create a Minority Prostate Cancer Training and Research Center at FAMU.*

He currently serves on the *board of directors for the Moffitt Cancer Center Hospital*, is a member of the *Food & Drug Administration’s Oncologic Drugs Advisory Committee* and the *National Cancer Institute’s Consumer Advocates in Research and Related Activities Committee*. Enjoying an “active retirement,” Bob moved to Florida from New York in 1992 after a long illustrious career as a professional banker, serving as Vice President Global Financial Institutions Group, a division of Manufacturers Hanover’s Corporate Banking and International Sector (JP Morgan Chase). He also served as a visiting professor for the *National Urban League’s Black Executive Exchange Program* and has lectured at colleges across the nation.

## **Clifton Leaf** **Senior Editor-at-Large, Fortune Magazine**

### *Excellence in Journalism*

Clifton Leaf is a Senior Editor at Large at *Fortune* Magazine. Previously, he served as the magazine’s Executive Editor, editing many of *Fortune’s* cover stories and major features, and for much of the past five years, directing its Wall Street and investing coverage as well. Cliff has also written a number of articles for *Fortune*, including his 2004 cover story, entitled “*Why We’re Losing the War on Cancer (And How to Win It)*,” which won the Gerald Loeb Award for Distinguished Business Journalism, the Henry R. Luce Award for public service, and the NIHCM’s 2005 Health Care Journalism Award. The story, which has been cited in several prominent scientific journals and colloquia, continues to spark a vigorous global debate about whether efforts against this disease are properly focused.

Last summer, Cliff presented testimony to the *President’s Cancer Panel* and, this past April, he addressed the opening plenary session of the Annual Meeting of the *American Association for Cancer Research*, a gathering of some 15,000 cancer researchers, in Anaheim, California. He has also been a keynote speaker at several major medical and scientific conferences, including the *Prostate Cancer Foundation’s Scientific Retreat, C-Change’s 2004 meeting, the Susan G. Komen Mission Conference*, and the annual meeting of the *American Radium Society*, in Barcelona, Spain. Last year he was a panelist in a Capitol Hill “Town Hall” on chemoprevention and early detection, co-sponsored by *Friends of Cancer Research*, the *House Cancer Caucus* and the *Senate Cancer Coalition*. And this past June, he moderated another Capitol Hill panel on blood cancer, sponsored by the *Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation* and the *Lymphoma Research Foundation*.

Recently honored by the *National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship* at their Ribbon of Hope Gala, Cliff also received a *2004 Leadership Award from Friends of Cancer Research* and serves on advisory boards for *the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation* and the University of California, San Francisco’s prostate cancer (SPORE) grant program.

He is currently writing a book on the war on cancer for Alfred A. Knopf, due for publication in 2006.

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## **Virgil H. Simons** **Founder & President, The Prostate Net, Inc.**

Virgil H. Simons founded **The Prostate Net** in 1995 as a result of his own experience in surviving prostate cancer. He envisioned the need for a system of information and support that would enable patients and survivors of prostate cancer, their families and caregivers to make informed choices as to therapeutic options.

The Prostate Net (<http://www.ProstateNet.org>) currently serves over 50 countries internationally and handles in excess of 60,000 “visits” per month. Mr. Simons also serves on several major governmental and private agency groups in providing service to the patient and professional communities.

In 2004, Virgil launched the **“Going to the Barbershop to Fight Cancer”** a national health awareness campaign urging men to get checked for prostate cancer. Taking advantage of the unique status barbershops have as a trusted resource of news and information, the program includes an extensive network of barbers who serve as “lay health motivators” trained at nearly 60 medical centers throughout the country. This year, the program expanded to include: **“Wired Barbershops”** that feature interactive kiosks with educational videos and information plus a voluntary survey to assist health professionals in better understanding communities at risk, and the **“1<sup>st</sup> Annual In the Know Awards for Eliminating Health Disparities”** to recognize the contributions of health professionals and wellness advocates.

“Wired Barbershops” are part of **“The Knowledge Net”** (<http://www.theknowledgenet.info>), an umbrella health education campaign that will ultimately provide information regarding heart disease, obesity, diabetes and other health issues. The Prostate Net programs are supported by the Fannie E. Rippel Foundation, Celgene Corporation and Sanofi Aventis Oncology.

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END OF BIOGRAPHIES

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