

# It's Time To Celebrate Your Gifts

Contributed by Calvin Reese  
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This year's Millennium Magazine "Celebrating Your Gifts" Youth Awards will be hosted by the 2007 Youth Award Winners. Pictured from left; Twana Williams, Community Service Winner; De'Shawn D. Jones, Leadership Winner and Haley Guyton, Talent Winner

## 6th Annual Millennium Magazine Youth Awards Program

(Columbia, SC) - The Millennium Magazine will honor Midlands youngsters during its 6th Annual Celebrating Your Gifts Youth Awards ceremony slated for Thursday, March 27, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the AT&T Auditorium in Columbia, SC. The program is being sponsored by Mike Kelly Law Group, Columbia Metropolitan Airport, Brookland Baptist Church, Ron Emmons Personal Training & Weight Management, Carolina First Bank and AT&T.

The best and the brightest 11 to 14-year-olds from Richland and Lexington County public middle schools will be recognized for their achievements in Community Service, Leadership, Journalism and Talent categories.

Millennium Magazine President and Founder Calvin Reese first thought to honor our children in such a way. He says, "all children are capable of achieving their dreams. Recognizing accomplishments early in a child's life is crucial and can prove to be positively life changing for our youth."

"The establishment of the Millennium Magazine Youth Awards for Lexington and Richland school districts says to these young people that they are not invisible...we see them, their voices are not silenced...we hear them, their passions, desires and challenges are what we want to share with them on their journey toward the most fulfilling future possible. We, therefore, take this opportunity to reward their achievements by "Celebrating their Gifts," stated Reese.

This year, Jim Rex, South Carolina State Superintendent of Education, will be the Keynote Speaker.

### Jim Rex, State Superintendent of Education

Jim Rex took the oath of office as South Carolina's 16th State Superintendent of Education on January 10, 2007, and is at work fulfilling the promises he made to the people of our State during his successful 2006 campaign. Those include:

- accelerating innovation;
- reforming accountability to ensure its success;
- expanding public school choices for parents and students;
- promoting fair and equitable school funding;
- and elevating and reinvigorating the teaching profession.

In fact, within weeks of taking his oath in January, Jim Rex unveiled a sweeping public school choice plan that has received broad bipartisan support in the General Assembly. He also accepted 97 far-reaching recommendations on education reform from his 78-member Transition Team.

Rex followed that with a series of town hall meetings across the state in which he listened to South Carolinians and got their feedback on his ideas and plans. In April, he won approval from the State Board of Education for a new collaborative Palmetto Priority Schools project to improve student achievement at 16 low-achieving schools.

In May, Rex was back at work, unveiling a sweeping set of recommendations designed to unify South Carolina's state and federal school accountability systems, streamline state services to struggling schools and revise the state's standardized testing system to reduce testing time and provide more detailed information to teachers.

On the same day, Gov. Mark Sanford signed new legislation to expand South Carolina's fledgling virtual schools project that was piloted last school year by the South Carolina Department of Education. In addition, the General Assembly approved a 15-year replacement cycle for school buses, a move that holds the promise of rejuvenating South Carolina's oldest-in-the-nation fleet. A few days later, both houses of the Legislature quickly overrode Gov. Sanford's veto of the bill.

In 2008, Rex continues his push for reform with a package that includes components on public school choice, testing and accountability, teacher recruitment and retention and a comprehensive look at adequate and equitable school funding.

Jim has spent most of his adult life making a difference for the children, families, schools, and communities of South Carolina. As a high school English teacher, football coach, and higher education leader, he has made public education his life's mission.

In addition, he served as Dean of Education at Winthrop University, as well as Coastal Carolina University. He is the former President of Columbia College, as well as the former Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations and Vice President of University Advancement at the University of South Carolina. He is a published author and has served as a top consultant to education advocacy organizations.

But his work extends beyond the education realm. Jim has also lent his time and talents to a variety of community organizations, including serving as Chair of Clean Water South Carolina; a member of the Palmetto Conservation Foundation board of directors; and chair of the Palmetto Trail. He is also the former chair of the board of the Nurturing Center, a facility created to help abused children.

Jim and his wife, Sue, share four children: Adam, Jeff, Nathan, and Siri. They live on Lake Wateree in Fairfield County, South Carolina.

To RSVP or learn more about the Millennium Magazine Youth Awards, contact Calvin Reese, 803-252-0902 or email [newmillenniumnews@hotmail.com](mailto:newmillenniumnews@hotmail.com).