

The Times

Humanitarians recognized in Princeton

Lynne Azarchi, Edith Savage-Jennings and Jeff Perlman receive awards

Thursday, May 01, 2008

BY LISA RICH

EWING -- They spend much of their lives promoting tolerance and diversity.

Three Mercer County residents last night received humanitarian awards at the Trenton Country Club for their local efforts to cross cultures and promote social understanding throughout the Princeton area.

The accolades -- given by the Princeton Area Capital Chapter of the American Conference on Diversity -- were presented to Edith Savage-Jennings, Jeff Perlman and Lynne Azarchi.

"These are people who have made personal commitments to philanthropy and improving the quality of life for local residents, especially in terms of diversity and inclusion," said Diane Schwartz, president of the American Conference on Diversity.

Savage-Jennings, who is known for working side-by-side with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights movement, is also the chief of protocol for Trenton Mayor Douglas Palmer.

A lifelong resident of Trenton, she served for 32 years as the first black woman to be the assistant superintendent of the Mercer County Detention Center and was the first black woman member of Trenton's planning board, among others.

"I was just pleased to serve in those positions because no one else ever had," Savage-Jennings said. "I fought hard to make things right, in terms of desegregation and other things, and it was a struggle at times."

Receiving the humanitarian award was not expected, she said.

"I'm really humbled," she said. "I don't like praising myself, even though I feel I've earned it. But I'm very honored and happy to have been selected. It's a little surprising."

Lauded for his focus on promoting support for community housing, rescue missions and education, Perlman is the founder and managing director of Borden Perlman Insurance based in Lawrence.

But like Savage-Jennings, Perlman said he's not exactly used to the spotlight.

"It's interesting because I'm more comfortable at the other end, giving out awards to deserving people," said Perlman, a past president of Greenwood House and Home for the Jewish Age.

"Lots of days, you do the best you can and there's no thank-you," he said. "But while it's nice to be recognized, I truly believe in contributing to the community, not just financially but also through volunteerism and making the time commitment."

Lynne Azarchi of Trenton received the award for her work with Kidsbridge, a nonprofit organization in Chambersburg that focuses on children and diversity. She is the executive director of the organization.

Additionally, Azarchi helped launch the Tolerance Museum in Ewing through a partnership with The College of New Jersey. The museum conducts weekly life-skill programs for youth throughout Trenton.

Contact Lisa Rich at lrich@njtimes.com or (609) 989-5692.