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On January 21, 2006, the St. Petersburg Bar Foundation will honor the four lawyers profiled here for their tremendous contributions to our community. The Grand Ballroom of the Don CeSar Resort will serve as the backdrop for an elegant evening celebrating these Heroes Among Us. Please make plans now to join us on January 21. See the registration flyer in this issue.

“I am only one. But still I am one.

I cannot do everything,  
but still I can do something.

I will not refuse to do  
the something I can do.”

– Helen Keller

# Honoring the Heroes Among Us

## Leonard Milcowitz and Edward Lyons: Stepping Up to the Plate for Kids

By Pamela D. Cichon

It all started when Leonard Milcowitz, a man with a passion for baseball (he still plays in senior leagues), approached his partner, Ed Lyons, an admitted "sports illiterate," with the idea of exercising their shared strong sense of giving back to the community by sponsoring children to attend baseball summer camp. Lenny had read about former professional baseball player Roy Silver and his desire to work with children in the context of baseball, so Lenny called him and asked to get together. From there, the seeds of Extra Innings Youth Foundation, Inc. were sown.

When they saw the benefits derived by the children they sponsored at the summer camp in that first year, Lenny and Ed wanted to expand the children's opportunity into a year round program. However, unlike basketball or soccer, where kids only need ball and a space to play in order to have a game, baseball requires more equipment. Thus began the history of Milcowitz and Lyons stepping up to the plate.

Prior to forming the firm of Milcowitz and Lyons, Lenny & Ed both worked with the law firm of Wilkes and McHugh where they focused their practices on catastrophic nursing home and assisted living facility litigation. They left Wilkes and McHugh to become partners in the now five-lawyer, Clearwater firm of Milcowitz and Lyons. Six years ago they became partners in philanthropy when, from a common belief that children are our most valuable treasure, they decided to share their success with "at risk" children in our community.

Partnering first with Kings Highway Elementary School in Clearwater, which could identify its "at-risk" children in grades 3, 4, and 5, the law partners first had a baseball field built at the school, hired teachers to work with the children after school on their homework, and then bought a portable classroom to put next to the ball field where the academic part of the program could be accomplished. When the homework is finished, it is time to play ball. The teachers were allowed to establish the rules of eligibility, which did not include any grade expectations, just things like being on time, showing respect, and general good behavior. But an improvement in the participants' grades soon appeared, and the program expanded to four schools.

The focus of the academic program has now shifted to children in the upper grades, particularly from Clearwater Intermediate, where much of the student body is considered "at risk." Lenny speaks, not with pride because he says this is not about him, but with

satisfaction about Extra Innings' kids who had been failing in school eventually appearing on the honor roll. A primary goal of the program is to motivate children in school.

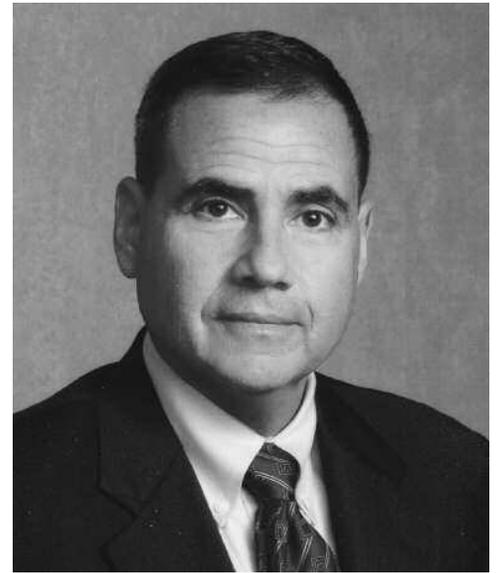
Recently, the home of the Extra Innings Foundation was relocated to the Jack Russell Stadium in Clearwater. When the Philadelphia Phillies moved to their new stadium, Jack Russell Stadium was left without a team. Since the stadium is across the street from Clearwater Intermediate, the move for the Extra Innings Foundation was a natural. Roy Silver went to the city with the proposal to use the stadium for high school tournaments and other things that Extra Innings was doing. Space at the stadium was converted to classrooms. Teachers are still paid in order to ensure their quality and commitment and the baseball coaches are all volunteers.

In light of all the positive changes and growth of the Foundation, Lenny says that no program for children should ever feel content with itself. He and Ed provide 90 - 95% of the support for the Foundation and Lenny sees a bigger future for it: partnering with education and someday having a program that mirrors the Chi Chi Rodriguez Youth Foundation, creating a program of education for children who need special attention (often due to having no stable adult presence in their lives) and providing that special attention through baseball.

Lenny and Ed envision a program in which the children would spend time in a traditional classroom, finish in early afternoon and then be out in the baseball world, not just as players, but learning every facet of the game: broadcasting, writing, umpiring, business management, and agronomy. Since the stadium employs its own field maintenance crew and has a sports medicine department, the children already have people on site to teach them about those vital aspects of baseball.

Lenny is a father of 3, a grandfather, and a Vietnam veteran, who moved to Florida to practice as a Certified Physician Assistant after receiving a Bachelor of Health Science Degree from Duke University. He then earned his law degree from the University of Florida and became the managing partner of Stephens, Lynn, Klein & McNicholas. He is now focusing more on the things he enjoys and letting the younger members of the firm continue on in the courtroom.

Ed earned his law degree, magna cum laude, from the University of Bridgeport and is licensed to



practice in Florida, Connecticut, and New York. He is the father of a 3 year old son and has lived in the area for 15 years. Although Lyons did watch the World Series games, he enjoys boating and playing golf.

Through the years, Lenny and Ed have shown that giving back to our community is the best way to acknowledge our own success and that making a positive difference in a child's life is what really makes someone a hero.

*Pam Cichon graduated from Stetson in 1979 and has been a Senior Assistant City Attorney for the City of St. Petersburg for the past 15 years. She is the incoming Chair of the Government Lawyers Section of The Florida Bar, a Certified Circuit Court Mediator, and an arbitrator.*

