Spirit of Achievement Awards Dinner Honors Six Outstanding New Mexico Citizens

Event on May 22 Benefits Nation’s Leading Respiratory Hospital, National Jewish Health

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ALBUQUERQUE, NM — On May 22, the nation’s leading respiratory hospital, National Jewish Health, will honor six New Mexico citizens for their contributions of time, talents and resources to the New Mexico community. They will be recognized during the 32nd annual New Mexico Spirit of Achievement Awards Dinner at the Embassy Suites Hotel Albuquerque. This year’s honorees are:

- Joanne Fine, retired chief communications officer, United Way of Central New Mexico;
- William Thomas and Michael Keleher, all of the law firm Keleher & McLeod; and
- Race car driving legend Al Unser, Sr., and his wife, Susan, founders of the Unser Racing Museum and the Unser Discovery Campus.

The New Mexico Spirit of Achievement Award Dinner, a mainstay event among business, philanthropy and political leaders in and around Albuquerque, has raised well over $1 million since its inception. The funds raised at the event benefit patients in New Mexico and around the country who receive care from National Jewish Health in Denver for respiratory, immune, cardiac and related diseases. Last year, National Jewish Health physicians treated nearly 300 New Mexico residents and thousands more since 1980 when the Spirit of Achievement Award Dinner began.

To attend the 2014 New Mexico Spirit of Achievement Award Dinner, contact Rebecca Reutlinger at ReutlingerR@NJHealth.org.

Joanne Fine has spent more than 40 years working to benefit the people of central New Mexico. From 1996 through 2013, she served as the chief communications officer of United Way of Central New Mexico.

During her tenure at United Way, the Central New Mexico chapter tripled its fundraising and was awarded over 100 state, regional and national communications awards. In addition, Joanne received the Marketer of the Year award from the New Mexico Chapter of the American Marketing Association and the Cumbre Award from the Public Relations Society of New Mexico. She worked with 14 local organizations to open the Albuquerque Family Advocacy Center in 2007, an organization for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse, in 2007.

Now retired, Joanne enjoys spending time with her husband, Art, and their two sons. She continues to devote her time to local nonprofit organizations and has begun writing a book for children.

Michael L. Keleher joined Keleher & McLeod in 1962 and is presently of counsel. He has held a Martindale Hubbell AV Preeminent rating for more than 25 years and was mentioned in Best Lawyers in America under real estate. His primary legal areas were real property, probate and trust. He is a high school graduate of NMNI in Roswell, New Mexico, and earned a bachelor’s degree from University of New Mexico, a master’s degree from New York University while on active duty with the U.S. Navy, and a law degree from the University of Mississippi.

Michael served as a member of the University of Albuquerque Board, Old Lincoln County Memorial Commission, City of Albuquerque Environmental Planning Commission, Shared Vision Inc., and RO Anderson Foundation Board. He was chair of the Bernalillo County Unit of the American Cancer Society, City Land Controls Board, NMSU Rio Grande Historical Collectors, the New Mexico Diamond Jubilee/U.S. Constitution Bicentennial Commission, Archdiocese Development Counsel, and Catholic Foundation.
He is currently a member of the New Mexico and American Bar Associations, New Mexico Amigos, University of New Mexico Alumni Letterman's Association, Sigma Chi Alumni, Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher, Order of Friars Minor (affiliate), and chair of the Guadalupe Institute. He is mentioned in Who's Who in America.

Michael and his wife, Margaret Anne, have been married for 53 years and have six children and 16 grandchildren.

**Thomas F. Keleher** began his career as an officer in the U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps serving in the Philippines and Vietnam during the Vietnam War. After graduating from the University of New Mexico Law School in 1974, he joined Keleher & McLeod. He has led a distinguished career and has been recognized by the Best Lawyers in America, Martindale Hubbell AV and Benchmark Litigation.

Active in the community, Tom has served as chairman and on the board of the Center for Civic Values, president and board member of the Albuquerque Museum Foundation, chairman of the New Mexico State Bar Commercial Litigation and Antitrust Section, and was a panel member of the American Arbitration Association. He has been active in United Way of Central New Mexico. He is currently the finance chair of the St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center, co-chair of the Albuquerque Museum Foundation History Exhibit Fundraising Committee and is a member of the Executives' Association of Greater Albuquerque.

Thomas and his wife, Greta, have been married for 50 years and have five children and 12 grandchildren.

**William B. Keleher** is a member of the Keleher & McLeod law firm and is a life-long resident of New Mexico. A graduate of Stanford Law School, he served for two years in the U.S. Air Force as an assistant staff judge advocate before joining his father, W.A. Keleher, to practice law.

During his more than 50 years of law practice with Keleher & McLeod, Bill has focused primarily on public utility law, real estate, probate, trust and estate work, representing corporations and individuals. He currently is a member of The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel and is listed in the Best Lawyers in America in two areas, real estate and corporate law. He was chairman of the Federal Magistrate Selection Panel for the District of New Mexico from 1994 to 2009, serving under four chief judges of the New Mexico Federal District Court. He served as chair of U.S. Senator Pete Domenici’s re-election campaigns in 1996 and 2002.

Bill was a member of the board of trustees of the Valles Caldera Trust from 2005 to 2009, and served as chairman of that board in 2009. He is a lifetime member of the board of directors of the Albuquerque Economic Development Corporation, and currently is a member of the board of directors of the Casa Angelica Foundation and the Kirtland Partnership Committee. In 2012, the Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce awarded Bill the Steve Schiff Advocacy award. Bill has a deep interest in the history of New Mexico, which he learned from his father.

Bill and his wife, Jan, have been married for 56 years and have five children and 10 grandchildren.

Susan and Al Unser, Sr., met in 1994 after Al — a car-racing legend who was the second of only three drivers to win the Indianapolis 500 car race four times — retired from racing in 1994 and returned to Albuquerque.

In 2005, Al and Susan founded the Unser Racing Museum and the Unser Discovery Campus. More than 250,000 people have visited the museum, which has doubled in size since its opening and includes race cars, antique cars, art and an archive department of over 22,000 artifact displays. To date, the organizations have awarded more than $50,000 in scholarships to Albuquerque high school graduates.

Al and Susan’s dedication to education is rooted in Al’s experiences as a young man. Al says he took his education for granted, and later regretted it. As he became more successful in motorsports, he recalls being unable to take advantage of several opportunities because he wasn’t prepared. Al saw the importance of foreign languages, reading and math when he traveled internationally for races, encountered contracts and legal documents, and had to make financial decisions during his career. After he retired, Al returned to Albuquerque to provide guidance for young men and women and, with Susan’s background in business, they set out on this mission as second careers for both of them.

**National Jewish Health** is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 121 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the media resources page.
Media Contacts

Our team is available to arrange interviews, discuss events and story ideas.

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