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African American Achievers Awards honors local leaders

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Joining Colin Brown (Standing, middle), president and CEO of JM Family Enterprises, and Jan Moran (seated, middle), chairman and president of The Jim Moran Foundation, with the 2011 African-American Achievers: (Standing, from left): Dwight and Dinah Stephenson, John Battle III and Lt. Nathaniel Lasseur. Seated from left: Victoria Fleury, Jerome Edmund Gray; and Mia Merritt.

Six local leaders were honored recently at the 19th Annual African American Achievers Awards.

“It is so important to say ‘thank you’ and to recognize people achieving extraordinary things,” said Colin Brown, president and CEO of JM Family Enterprises, during the April 6 celebration attended by nearly 1,000 guests at the Broward County Convention Center.

The event was hosted by Calvin Hughes, news anchor for WPLG Channel 10.

Entertainment was provided by the Women’s Ensemble of Dillard Center for the Arts and EJ’s Company Band.

Southeast Toyota Distributors and JM Lexus, subsidiaries of JM Family Enterprises also hosted the evening.

The 2011 African-American Achievers include Hallandale High School performing arts teacher John W. Battle III, for the award’s Arts and Culture category; Dwight and Dinah Stephenson, owners of D. Stephenson Construction of Fort Lauderdale for Business and Entrepreneurism; West Palm Beach firefighter Lt. Nathaniel Lasseur, for Community Service; and Mia Y. Merritt, an administrator for Miami-Dade County Public Schools, for Education.

Victoria Fleury, a senior at Palm Beach Gardens High School, won the Jerome Edmund Gray Youth Achiever award.

As part of the award, winners were able to designate \$10,000 to \$40,000 in donations for charities of their choice, nonprofit programs that serve each category. Since the award’s creation in 1992, JM Family Enterprises has awarded \$240,000.

“We are all interconnected and individuals who lift up the community deserve our respect and our honor,” Brown said. “That’s what this event is all about. Our Achievers’ stories give us hope, and they inspire us to do great things.”

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