

RSVA 2014 SUMMER CONVENTION AWARDS

By: Eddie Turner, RSVA Awards Chair

Annually, RSVA gives awards to a few people who advocate for the Randolph-Sheppard Program. This year's award winners are much deserved individuals.

The "**Jennings Randolph Service Award**" is presented to someone outside of the Randolph-Sheppard Program who has given his or her time and energy to Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America and for his or her service to blind vendors, but is not an active vendor.

This year's winner hails from California. He has been an active volunteer for the American Council of the Blind, the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America, and the California Council of the Blind. He volunteers for tours and at the hospitality functions. He also regularly attends and volunteers at the RSVA Sagebrush National BEP Training Conference generally held in Las Vegas. **Congratulations to Rex Ransom from the highest hill in El Segundo, CA.**

The "**Vendor of the Year Award**" is presented to an RSVA member who has been an active member for at least five years and has given his or her time and energy to Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America and for service to blind vendors. This vendor was born in 1976 in Atlanta, Ga with a hereditary eye disease. After graduating Salutatorian from the Alabama School for the Blind in 1994, he attended the University of Montevallo for 3 years and operated a family arcade and gift shop. In 2002, he graduated from the Alabama Business Enterprise Program at E.H. Gentry Technical Facility and began operating a temporary facility for 6 months in Birmingham. He then accepted a promotion to manage a cafeteria at the University of South Alabama's

Nursing School where he and his staff served over 200 meals a day and serviced 22 vending machines in the facility.

In 2006, he accepted his current vending route in Birmingham, Alabama, which has 45 locations with a total of 95 vending machines. He is "temping" a maximum security prison that has 16 vending machines, as well as a Birmingham vending route with 20 locations and a total of 60 machines.

He is married to Angela and they have a daughter named Mary. He and Angela lead a children's ministry at Union Hill Baptist Church and he teaches the 6th and 7th grade boys Sunday school class. He serves as the Vice-chairman of the Elected Committee of Blind Vendors. He is also the Second Vice-President of the Alabama Council of the Blind, serves on the Blind Advisory Committee of Alabama, and was recently appointed to the State Independent Living Council by Governor Robert Bentley. **Congratulations Michael Talley!**

The "**Don Cameron Advocacy Award**" is presented in memory of Don Cameron for his many years of service for blind vendors especially in the areas of communication and legislation. The winner has been a member of RSVA for at least five years, a blind vendor for at least twenty years, and is seeking to improve the goals of RSVA, as well as promoting blind awareness in the community, state, and nation. The winner of this award lives in Cleveland, OH, and has been operating a facility in the Cleveland Post Office for many years. He served as President of RSVA from 2002-2006. He was awarded the RSVA "Vendor of the Year" Award in 1997 in Houston, TX. **Congratulations Richard Bird for receiving this year's "Don Cameron Advocacy" Award.**

The **RSVA Special services Award** is given periodically to RSVA members who provide exemplary and exceptional service. This year RSVA is presenting two Special Services Awards.

It is not very often that RSVA has the opportunity to make a Special Service Award to someone as widely known and beloved as this recipient. During her many years of service with RSVA, RSVL, and numerous other blind advocacy boards and associations, she has come to exemplify the unsung hero. For well over twenty years, she has been the office manager for RSVL, and until 2012 the office manager for RSVA. But who she is and what she has done during her tenure is better defined as an advocate of the Randolph-Sheppard Program.

Terry Camardelle relates a story about her when she worked in one of his stands in the early days. At first it was a job. Then she was offered the office manager position at RSVA and the job became a career. The day to day operations of RSVA gave her a perspective few sighted people ever gain about blindness, and from this experience her career became a vocation. Over time, her vocation became underscored by her passion and commitment towards the Randolph-Sheppard Program. She is currently stepping back to spend more time with her husband, Tommy, and her grandchildren.
Congratulations, Kim Venable!

The **RSVA Special Services Award** was also given to Harvey Johnson, who presently operates the Fort Bliss military dining facility in Texas. Harvey has regularly attended the RSVA Sagebrush National BEP Training Conference and has made significant contributions as a vendor and long-term member of RSVA. **Congratulations Harvey Johnson!**