



March 27, 2006 Wyandotte Distinguished Graduate Inductee



Roland E. Owens Class of 1958

Roland E. Owens, Class of 1958, has distinguished himself for his community and charitable work. Since his retirement from Ford Motor Company, Mr. Owens embraced the opportunity to travel a new career path.

Mr. Owens had been a folk singer in the Detroit Metropolitan area in the 1960's. He then spent three decades with Ford and was working on his Master's Degree when an accident led to retirement. Owens went on to earn his degree with honors. He turned again to his talents as a singer and musician, partnered with his wife Carol Ann and began entertaining children and adults with music, storytelling and magic through their Dream Machine Family Concerts & School Assemblies.

As *Mr. Ro*, Owens and his wife Carol Ann (*Carey Ann the Clown*) have taken their show to many downriver communities; they have also "gone international", using part of their annual vacation to Cozumel, Mexico, to entertain children in schools and churches in impoverished areas. There, Roland's music and magic cross language and cultural barriers, creating new, unimagined experiences for the children of Cozumel.

State-wide, Roland works with the Michigan Arts and Humanities Council's Touring Artists Program. He has created *Laugh and Learn Concerts* which he brings to children in their schools, in libraries, and in civic venues throughout Michigan.

Locally, Roland serves on the Board of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Using the talent he developed in retirement-videography, he has created promotional videos for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and has written and recorded their local theme song.

As *Mr. Ro*, Roland has contributed his time and talents to various annual events such as the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Light the Night Charity Walk, Southshore Hospital's Summer Safety Program, Trenton's Turn Off the Violence Program, and St. Elizabeth's Children of Prisoners Christmas Program, as well as numerous individual charitable fundraisers. With his wife Carol Ann, Roland

founded Kids Unlimited, an organization which encourages children's awareness of and involvement in the Downriver Community.

For over 12 years, Roland has been a participant in both the 4th of July and the Christmas parades in Wyandotte. Not only does he have fun, but he also motivates participants in his unit to donate nonperishable food items for the needy through Wyandotte's Salvation Army Food Pantry.

In 2005, he organized several alumni in Wyandotte's Fourth of July Parade, celebrating the city's 150th anniversary. Their entry involved over 50 adults and children, and won second place Parade Honors.

In the past ten years, Roland has been recognized for his charitable work and community service by many organizations.

Roosevelt High School is proud of Roland and his achievements; prouder still of his giving spirit and contributions to the community. We are pleased to honor him with the Distinguished Graduate Award, 2006.