

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Conference Speakers

April 30, 2004

Egan Center • Anchorage, Alaska

Scott Merriner

Scott is the chairman of the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Task Force. He currently serves ChangePoint (formerly Grace Community Church) in Anchorage as an administrative pastor. He is on the board of the Downtown Soup Kitchen, an organization that serves 350 meals daily to Anchorage's homeless and working poor, and serves on the board of GraceAlaska, a non-profit organization focused on creating partnerships among the faith community to meet practical needs in the community. Scott has worked as an analyst at the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, and as a management consultant for McKinsey & Company in its Chicago and South African offices. Reared in Juneau, Anchorage and Dillingham, Scott graduated from Dillingham High School and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Harvard University. He is the fourth Alaskan to be awarded a Rhodes Scholarship for study at Oxford University where he received a Masters Degree in International Relations.

Lieutenant Governor Loren Leman

Lieutenant Governor Loren Leman's family history in Alaska goes back more than 200 years to a marriage in Kodiak between a Russian shipwright and an Alutiiq woman from Afognak. Gold miners, Alaska Natives, fishermen and missionaries have figured prominently in his family's history. He is the first person of Alaska Native ancestry to be elected to statewide office in Alaska. In addition to serving in the Alaska Legislature for 14 years, Lieutenant Governor Leman is a consulting civil/environmental engineer and fisherman. He and his wife Carolyn have three children- Joseph, Rachel and Nicole. Loren Leman grew up in Ninilchik where he graduated from high school. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Oregon State University and his Masters Degree in Civil/Environmental Engineering from Stanford University. He has also studied Arctic Engineering at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Deputy Commissioner Karleen Jackson

Karleen Jackson is an author and human services professional currently serving as Deputy Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Alaska Pacific University, a Masters Degree in human development and a Ph.D. in human services from the Fielding Institute. Her first book, "Family Homelessness: More Than Simply a Lack of Housing" was published in 2000 as part of the Garland Studies series on Children of Poverty. An Alaskan resident since 1965, Dr. Jackson worked at Catholic Social Services (CSS) in Anchorage from December 1991 through February 2003, serving as Executive Director for almost five years. During her tenure at CSS, Dr. Jackson actively participated in community collaborative efforts including several partnerships between faith-based/community organizations and government agencies.

Commissioner Marc Antrim

Marc Antrim is the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Corrections. Commissioner Antrim is a 32-year resident of Alaska, a graduate of Juneau-Douglas High School and University of Alaska at Fairbanks, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice in 1983. A 19-year employee of the Department of Corrections, Antrim has served as a correctional officer, shift supervisor, and recently as lieutenant, supervising all administrative sergeants.

Freedom Challenge

Freedom Challenge, a ministry of Teen Challenge of Alaska, is a faith-based substance abuse recovery program. For over 20 years the facility near Palmer was operated as a men's program. Converted last year to a women's home, the residents are primarily coming directly from the corrections system. The year-long residential program has been enhanced by the addition of a Transitional Living House in Anchorage. The women regularly perform in music, human video and give powerful testimonies to their transformed lives. The human video number they are performing for the Alaska FBCI Conference is "Miles and Miles Away".

Dr. Judith Kleinfeld

Founder of the Northern Studies program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Dr. Kleinfeld was awarded the Emil Usibelli Award for Distinguished Research for her work, particularly her contribution

to the education of those affected by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Judith has done extensive research in teacher education, particularly on cross-cultural education and the success of different types of teachers and school environments on Alaska Native children. She is a graduate of Wellesley College and Harvard University and is a member of the Alaska Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Task Force.

Jenny Forner

Mrs. Forner is the founder and current President of New Focus National, a non-profit faith-based training organization established in 1994 to provide churches with tools and processes to cultivate change in families' finances and relationships, moving people from getting, to gaining, to giving. Jenny has offered the New Focus National training program to more than 21 different denominations in 19 states. Before founding New Focus she helped form a Love INC program in Allendale, Michigan. Jenny has been involved in church outreach programs for over 20 years and loves to see people use their God given talents to empower others. She and her husband Floyd have been married for 42 years and have 3 children and 13 grandchildren.

Michael Joyce

Mr. Joyce has been described as the “godfather of modern philanthropy.” Over his 25 plus year career in private philanthropy he has held leadership positions with the John M. Olin, Goldseker and Bradley foundations. In 2001, he ended his 15-year tenure as President and CEO of the Bradley Foundation, a Milwaukee-based grant making institution. . At the behest of President George W. Bush he created *Americans for Community and Faith Centered Enterprise* to build support for the White House faith-based initiative. He is currently a partner in the Washington Consulting firm, Practical Strategies, Inc. Mr. Joyce holds degrees in history and philosophy and a Ph.D. in politics and education. He has served on five presidential commissions and numerous private bodies concerned with philanthropy and public policy. A proponent of school choice, he has been instrumental in developing the intellectual framework for faith-based efforts.

Ken Truitt

Ken Truitt is a graduate of the College of Law at Arizona State University and is currently an Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Division of the Alaska Department of Law. He provides legal services support to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and is an ex-officio member of the Alaska Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Task Force.

Blanket of Wellness

Blanket of Wellness is a collaborative project to encircle young children in a “blanket of wellness” through a variety of activities intended to meet their social and emotional needs. Panel members will share their experiences with an emphasis on the process of planning, developing, implementing, maintaining and evaluating the effectiveness of their collaborative programs. Through the experiences of the panel members, conference participants will gain an awareness of some of the more common issues related to creating an effective collaboration with others and steps to tackle the concerns and challenges that arise when coalitions are formed. Panel members will be from among coalition member groups: Juneau Christian Child Care, Tlingit and Haida, the South East Regional Health Corporation, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Head Start Program, RurAL CAP, REACH, Inc., Mt.. Edgecumbe Preschool and other Southeast Alaska organizations and parents of pre-school children.

Gail West

Gail West has worked in community development for more than 15 years and as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Alaska faith-based liaison for the past two years. During that time, Gail has been instrumental in creating community partnerships with faith-based, community, tribal and government organizations to further affordable housing, community development and economic development goals. Gail has developed partnerships to implement a welfare-to-work conference, grant-writing training and rural community and economic development conferences for urban and rural Alaska.

Mary Ashmore

Mary is a project coordinator with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. She has extensive policy, regulation writing and administration experience. She has provided training to individuals and community groups on the DHSS grant regulations and process. For over 30 years Mary has been working in the social service field through a variety of positions with non-profit and governmental agencies.