

**Whitney Young, Jr. Dinner Remarks**  
**By Stephen Schwab, Pathway to Adventure Council President**

Distinguished Guests, Award Recipients, Fr. Jones, fellow Scouters and Scouts:

We have come together tonight to recognize and honor five men and women who have served the African American community in critically important ways, all the while exemplifying the ideals of Scouting. Anne Pramaggiore, James Montgomery, Emil Jones, Melody Spann-Cooper and Darryl Dennard - there is no doubt that they have taken their community serving steps deliberately, with purpose and conviction. Each of them had a plan and they were prepared. I'd like to speak with you briefly tonight about the Scout motto, "Be prepared."

Let's begin with the man for whom the award we make tonight was named, Whitney Young. He said, "It is better to be prepared for an opportunity and not have one, than to have an opportunity and not be prepared."

Scouts spend years learning how to be prepared for anything that confronts them, large or small. A number of years ago, I was preparing for a backpacking trek in the mountains of New Mexico with a small group of high school rising seniors and another dad. We were on a shakedown hike – a preparatory moment where the Scouts and adults take their full packs and spend a weekend getting ready for the trip out West. As we walked up a small incline, the other dad stopped. He was obviously having trouble breathing. When I asked if he was ok, he told me he had severe asthma. "How can you go on this trip?" I asked. "We'll be going up and down thousands of feet every day." He answered, "I'll be ok. I told the higher ups about this and they said it was ok." When we got to New Mexico, we hadn't gone very far up the first small mountain when the dad had to stop. Sometimes he couldn't go more than 50 steps without stopping. I was certain the Scouts would go ballistic over our halting pace. About an hour in, we stopped on an overlook of a beautiful valley. One of the Scouts turned to the dad and said, "you know, Mr. Paul, if we weren't stopping like this, we wouldn't have the chance to fully appreciate this." The Scouts were prepared; they took the small interruptions in stride to help someone not as strong as they. We had certain milestones to achieve every day. We just adjusted our plan: we left camp an hour earlier and arrived at the next camp an hour later. Every one of those Scouts became Eagles. They were, and each one of them remains, prepared.

I came prepared to raise up our awardees tonight. I am humbled by their accomplishments, and so I want to make sure we are worthy of their attention. When we last gathered for this event last year, I pledged to each of you first, that the Pathway to Adventure Council would include all people in Scouting throughout this Council, and second that we would bring Scouting back into all of the neighborhoods in our communities on a fully diverse and inclusive basis. Those two pledges became the first two goals I set for our council for the year. The third goal was to bring the outdoors closer to home of our Scouts through partnerships with our forest preserve and park districts.

In a moment, our Scout Executive Jeff Isaac will tell you how we are achieving the first two goals; the third is well on its way. May I just say that we have set the tone at the top: Jeff Isaac is our Scout Executive. Our Executive Board reflects our community. Would those with us tonight please stand as I call out your name: our County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, GoGo Wireless' CEO Michael Small, Riteway Construction's Co-Owner Larry Huggins, our Council Commissioner Sue Simmons, Accenture founder Andre Hughes, attorney Manny Sanchez, UIC Vice Chancellor Robert Barish, Mr. Isaac and me. We have a few more seats to fill by community leaders who are equally reflective of our diversity. We have a plan, we are prepared.

Tonight, in honor of our awardees, I pledge to achieve three new goals this next year that are related to and build on last year's. They are one, Growing Together, two, Open to All, and three, Fully Sustainable. What do they mean? Let me answer this way: On June 6, 1961, MLK delivered the commencement address at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. It has come to be known as "The American Dream." MLK said: "all life is interrelated. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality; tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. . . . I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. You can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way the world is made . . . the interrelated structure of reality." Growing Together, Open to All, Fully Sustainable. We can and must do this together, for one another.

We will need your help every step of the way.

Please be sure to congratulate our awardees. The tokens of honor we bestow upon them tonight are most fitting. May the fulfillment of the pledge we made tonight become their ultimate reward. I thank each of them and I thank each of you.