

# Perspective

Sunday, April 27, 2014

## LEE COUNTY JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT HALL OF FAME

# Passion in their Work

■ 2014 honorees Loren and Love share advice in induction speeches

**T**he secrets of our success.

That is what a Junior Achievement of Southwest Florida dinner audience heard from world-renowned chocolatier Norman Love of Norman Love Confections and award-winning jewelry designer Mark Loren of Mark Loren Designs as they were inducted into the Lee County J.A. Hall of Fame.

Both men live and have stores in Lee and Collier counties.

Loren and Love were honored for their contributions to the region's economic development, their service as role models for ethical and moral conduct among youth and business peers, and their accomplishments as community leaders.

More than 600 people attended the induction at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa.

Here are edited excerpts from their acceptance speeches.

Idea: Share this page with families with youngsters planning careers in business.

It might be educational.

— Jeff Lytle

Perspective editor

### Mark Loren

**A**lthough I really wanted to be an eye surgeon, I couldn't fathom the idea of attending school for 10 more years before I could actually be a surgeon, fixing people's eyes!

In high school art class I had been exposed to making jewelry and I had also won a Scholastic Art Award my senior year and I really enjoyed the hands-on aspect of metalsmithing.

Surprisingly, I stumbled across a technical school for jewelry arts called Gem City College School of Horology (with horology being the study of time). There, I learned and worked on jewelry and watches eight hours a day until I had earned certificates of completion — courses which were supposed to take about 2½ years, but I was able to finish in about a year.

From there, I went to work for successful jewelry companies in Chicago, Philadelphia, L.A. and New York, where I learned the distinctions necessary to be a great jeweler.

I want you to know that I was totally consumed with learning my craft. My parents let me set up a jewelry shop in our freezing basement where I set diamonds until all hours of the night, after I had come home from working at my real jeweler job. I set thousands of diamonds wearing my ski jacket, ski pants and winter boots. That way, I could earn and save extra money to one day have my own gallery.

Very early on, I envisioned myself working at what I am now doing. I didn't have any idea how I would get there, but with almost every decision that I made, I moved closer to that moment of where I saw myself designing and creating in my own gallery. I am, and will always be, an artist first and a businessperson second.

For the most part, the business community defines my galleries as retail jewelry



JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

Norman Love, left, and Mark Loren at Lee County Junior Achievement Hall of Fame dinner.

businesses — that what we do is buy, sell, design and fix pretty, expensive, sparkly things. But my staff and I come to work each day knowing that people come in our door and hire us to communicate to someone else that they love them — that's it, very simple — we help people say "I love you" to someone else.

In my book, that goes way past "retail" and it becomes a powerful context for coming to work and making a difference in people's lives every day.

So, thank you to everyone in this room for allowing me the opportunity to express my passion, my love for people and my love for my community with my art.

### Norman Love

**I** always seem to say, when I speak around town, that we always have to be careful what we wish for in life.

You see, students, like you, I have always carried that burning desire, that intense entrepreneurial spirit and the will to someday own and operate my

own business.

Junior Achievement represents many of the core values that have helped me in my life — free enterprise, entrepreneurship, financial literacy and business ethics.

I may be the recipient of this award tonight, but this evening is about you!

Through the years I have had the opportunity to interview and work alongside so many great professionals, and, honestly, job experience is always the least important quality to me. It's the least important part to me.

Technical ability can always be taught, but passion, commitment, tireless work ethic and sacrifice are the characteristics in people that not only can't be taught, but they are the qualities that individuals who strive to be the best must carry.

It takes a very special person who is capable of establishing goals and working tirelessly to achieve those goals. It's always human nature to focus on the excuse, and here's an example.

# INDUCTEES

from **1B**

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My 2014 New Year's resolution: I want to be a lean, mean running machine. I want to be healthy!

So, we always start on Jan. 2, because we know that on the first we aren't ready to start yet. But we have a goal, we have a commitment. We buy the new running shoes, a new running outfit.

It's 6 a.m.

The alarm goes off and we run 5 miles. We're tired, we're sore, we're exhausted, but we're focused. We're focused on that goal, we're focused on the commitment to be that lean, mean running machine. I want to be healthy.

Day 2 comes, you get back up, put the shoes back on. Now the muscles ache, a little bit tired, but I'm still focused on that goal, still focused on that

commitment. I want to be healthy. And again, we run 5 miles. We get back home, we're sorer than the first day, and more exhausted than the first day, but we're still focused.

Day 3 comes. It's raining. The new shoes are going to get wet, my legs really hurt. You see again, its human nature when we focus on the excuse and lose the focus of the commitment of our goal.

It takes a very special individual to always focus on the vision or goal and never focus on the excuse.

Set goals, students! Aim high, don't compromise and always stay focused.

Ladies and gentlemen, what I live by and what I instill in my team each and every day is that success is today. You go to work to be successful; you go to work to be the best; you go to work to be excellent! And what happens in the future is called reward.