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Please RISE

Patterson, Urban Spectrum publisher Rosalind Harris-Diaw (left) & artist Helen Littlejohn

Judge Beau Patterson

By Linda Kaufman

After an exciting 30-year career in public law, Judge Beau Patterson retired last year and, with wife Joyce, moved from Denver to Hilton Head. He's a staunch Broncos fan and stays in touch with his Denver roots with his one indulgence, the NFL package. For someone who was used to such an active and engaged lifestyle, it should come as no surprise that he chose to fill his life here with community involvement and start a new business.

After 20 years on the Denver County Court, honored as the 2004 Distinguished Jurist, and named 2003 Toastmaster of the Year, Judge Patterson is a man with something to say. Through Please Rise (www.pleaserise.com), Judge Patterson offers keynotes, workshops and training to businesses and organizations so their employees can overcome challenges in their work and lives and achieve peak performance. He is proud of his involvement in the Strive to Excel Program, donating time and expertise to influence and transform the lives of students from Hilton Head High School. He has also worked with Ridgeland Middle School programs and local community service organizations. In his home is a charcoal sketch that, even now, brings a lump to his throat.

While on the bench, Judge Patterson met a young man who was headed down the hopeless path of drug addiction. Jail time and drug treatment programs were ordered, but knowing these mandates alone might not make a difference, Beau went the extra distance to create a life changing attitude in this man. Because of this caring and concise communication of the message that his life had worth, the young man was inspired to stick with the program and stay clean. He later contacted Patterson's bailiff for a photo and drew the sketch which was presented at Judge Patterson's December 2004 retirement party.

How did this man from a humble background achieve so much in his professional life? He is the youngest of 6 children and the first one in his family to graduate from high school. His father, a soft spoken and hard-working man, congratulated him with words that – to this day – still motivate him: "You've made your mother proud today." Sadly, his father died six months afterwards and was unable to see how far his son would go and how many lives would benefit from his positive message.

It's a good thing that Beau didn't heed the advice of a high school counselor who said he was not college material and should settle for a career as a fry cook or a porter on a train.

Maybe there's a lesson in that for all of us who may not hear the inner voice that says we can do great things with our lives! Please Rise! **M**