



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

Number 18-151

October 2, 2018

MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** nancy.rodriquez@education.ky.gov

WESTERN KENTUCKY FOUNDATION FOUNDER WINS JOSEPH W. KELLY AWARD

(Frankfort, KY) – At its meeting today, the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) presented the 18th annual Joseph W. Kelly Award to Robbie Rudolph, president of Rudolph’s Inc. and founder of Four Rivers Foundation in Hickman.

The Kelly award, named for former KBE chair and businessman Joe Kelly, is given to businesspeople who offer outstanding leadership and service toward promoting school improvement and equitable educational opportunities for all Kentucky children.

Rudolph, a 1973 Fulton Independent Schools graduate, formed Four Rivers Foundation with his wife Lisa in 2010 to guarantee an opportunity for success for all students in Fulton Independent, Fulton County, Hickman County, Carlisle County and the Fulton County Technology Center.

Through partnerships with Murray State University, West Kentucky Community and Technical College, area businesses and community supporters, Rudolph strives to create a culture that removes financial and other barriers to create an environment where every student can be successful.

“Robbie has spent close to a decade expanding college and career opportunities for the 3,200 students Four Rivers Foundation serves,” Interim Commissioner of Education Wayne Lewis said. “We are grateful for his advocacy and confident that the culture of success he has fostered will continue to grow in decades to come.”

The letter nominating Rudolph noted that his passion to help students “without a support system” has been instrumental in raising ACT scores and increasing the number of dual credit college hours earned by graduating seniors in the area school districts.

Rudolph continues his advocacy by partnering with the technical centers, West Kentucky Work Ready Skills Initiative and the New Skills for Youth Cohort II to expand dual credit offerings and create pipelines from the centers through the technical colleges to the workplace.

(more)

Page 2 – Joseph W. Kelly Award

In 1988, Rudolph founded the Amazon Valley Mission Organization, a volunteer organization that provides dental work, medical care and eyeglasses to Brazil. He serves as the owner, founder and president of Rudolph Tire Company, an international tire wholesaler.

“Robbie continues to demonstrate a long-term commitment to making a difference in the lives of all Kentuckians,” Lewis said. “His dedication of time, resources and talent is truly deserving of the high recognition the Joseph Kelly Award bestows.”

The Kelly Award was created in honor of Joseph W. Kelly, a respected businessman and chair of KBE from 1991 to 1998. Kelly’s efforts and expertise were crucial to the implementation and nurturing of Kentucky’s school improvement efforts.

Previous Winners of the Joseph W. Kelly Award

2017 Ed Massey, partner at Blankenship, Massey and Associates, Attorneys at Law

2016 Brent Cooper, president of C-Forward Information Technologies in Covington, and Audwin Helton, president and CEO of Spatial Data Integrations Inc. in Louisville

2013 Jim Allen, chairman and CEO of Hilliard Lyons

2011 Henry Hunt, chief operating officer for Dataseam

2010 Helen M. Carroll, manager of Community Relations for Toyota Motor Engineering and Manufacturing North America Inc.

2009 Bud Hudson, CEO of Pattie A. Clay Regional Medical Center in Richmond

2008 Al Rider, president and CEO of the North Central Education Foundation in Elizabethtown

2007 Ben Cundiff, owner/operator of Cundiff Farms in Cadiz

2006 Henry Vogt Heuser Jr., CEO and president of Unistar/Vogt in Louisville

2005 Wynn Long Radford III, president and co-owner of Higgins Insurance Agency in Hopkinsville

2004 Ann Yager Hamlin, director of Stith Funeral Home in Danville

2003 State Senator Jimmy Higdon, owner of Higdon’s Foodtown in Lebanon

2002 Frank and Mattie Justice, founders of the Frank and Mattie Justice Charitable Foundation in Pikeville

2001 Billy Harper, president of Harper Industries Inc. in Paducah

2000 Vince and Valorie Tanner, owners of the Beaver Dam McDonald’s restaurant

###

Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>

Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/kydeptofed and Like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/kydeptofed>