



MDA TELETHON

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ARIZONA MAN RECEIVES ROBERT ROSS MDA NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

TUCSON, Ariz., Aug. 31, 2008 — Tom Bush of Oro Valley, Ariz., has been named the recipient of MDA's 2009 Robert Ross National Personal Achievement Award.

The award will be announced during the national broadcast of the 2008 Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon.

Initiated in 1992, the Personal Achievement Awards recognize the accomplishments and community service of people with disabilities caused by any of the diseases in the Muscular Dystrophy Association's program.

The awards were renamed in honor of Robert Ross, MDA's longtime chief executive, who died in June 2006. Ross created the Personal Achievement Award program to educate the public that disability is no obstacle to accomplishment.

– More –

AZ Man Receives Robert Ross MDA National Award/Page 2

"Tom Bush is truly deserving of this award," said MDA National Chairman Jerry Lewis. "He's a shining example of the great things that people with muscular dystrophy and other related diseases have accomplished."

Bush, 66, was chosen for the honor from dozens of recipients of the statewide awards, based on his personal and professional successes, and the ways in which he has served as a leader and role model for people with disabilities.

"It's an honor for MDA to present the 2009 Robert Ross National Personal Achievement Award to Tom Bush," MDA President & CEO Gerald C. Weinberg said. "His success is sure to inspire hope in others with muscle diseases, and in parents of children with those diseases, by demonstrating that life can be full and rewarding despite the challenges disability presents."

Bush retired in 1993 from a 30-year career with the state of New Jersey, finishing as director of the Office of Disabilities Management. Prior to his retirement, he managed the implementation of the provisions of the then newly enacted Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) within New Jersey state government.

From New Jersey, Bush moved to Tucson, Ariz., and began a 10-year career at MDA national headquarters, where he developed, operated and managed the national Web site, and worked on a number of special projects involving the local community and the MDA National Task Force on Public Awareness, before retiring again in 2004.

He served on the Oro Valley task force that created the community's award-winning accessible transportation service, Coyote Run; and was a founding member and served on the Board of Directors of Linkages, a Tucson-based organization dedicated to assisting people with disabilities in finding employment.

AZ Man Receives Robert Ross MDA National Award/Page 3

In addition, he was a commissioner on the City of Tucson Disability Issues Commission; a voice for disability interests on the Regional Transportation Authority Citizens Committee; vice president of the Architectural Barriers League; a member of the University of Arizona ADA Assessment Team; and a member of the statewide planning committee for the state of Arizona assistive technology grant program. Bush also serves as an elder in his church.

Prior to working for MDA, Bush volunteered time to supporting the organization. He also appeared several times on the national broadcast of the Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon.

Bush received a diagnosis of muscular dystrophy in 1949. In 1996, the diagnosis was genetically confirmed as spinal muscular atrophy, a progressive disease that causes weakness in muscles of the legs, arms, hands and lower back. He uses a power wheelchair and drives a specially adapted van.

MDA is a voluntary health agency working to defeat muscular dystrophy and related diseases through programs of worldwide research, comprehensive services, and far-reaching professional and public health education.

Originating from the South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa in Las Vegas, the MDA Telethon will begin at 9 p.m. EDT Sunday, Aug. 31, and run for 21½ hours. The Telethon reaches more than 40 million viewers via 180 “Love Network” stations nationwide and millions more worldwide on the Internet at mda.org.

In 2007, pledges and donations to the MDA Telethon brought in a record \$63.8 million.