



**From  
the  
Director**

by  
*Ann  
Dugger*

# Ted Hires' legacy is far-reaching

I'm quite sure Ted had no idea what the long-range effects of his actions would be the day he pursued criminals who robbed him at gunpoint all those years ago. He had no way of knowing that the outrage he felt in court (because the robbers had more rights than the victims) would translate to his starting an organization called the Justice Coalition, or that he would receive national, as well as local, recognition for his passionate fight for victims' rights.

In one way, his lack of a college degree might have placed him at a disadvantage when dealing with highly educated professionals, but he was so well-read and self-educated, his education (or lack thereof) was never a consideration. His sharp business sense and shrewd assessment of people and situations easily eclipsed the lack of a diploma. He had the uncanny ability to see the big picture and anticipate consequences of certain actions.

Ted was not an easy man to work for, but the obvious success of his businesses reflected his strong work ethic. He worked hard and expected everyone else to do the same. He was scrupulously honest; to him there was very little gray area -

everything was either black or white. A line in G. B. Shaw's *Pygmalion* reminds me of Ted: "He was, I believe, not in the least an ill-natured man: very much the opposite, I should say; but he would not suffer fools gladly."

And he probably would reprove me with a few well-chosen words - perhaps with one of his *Ted-isms* - if he were around today as we plan the Ted Hires Legacy Dinner to honor his name and award others whose missions are to help victims. But I know he could not help but be pleased.



The logo adapted by the THL committee is symbolic of what was important to Ted - and still is to the Justice Coalition. The shield stands for our local law enforcement agencies, the flame represents all the firefighters who work hard to rescue us and protect our property, and the torch is the legacy of compassion and assistance for victims that

we will perpetuate in Ted's name.

CPA Charles Wilson, a JC board member since the beginning of the organization, says many of the changes in the local - and possibly even statewide - justice system can be attributed to Ted. "After his experience in court with the criminals who attacked him, he was determined to see that welfare of victims would have higher priority than concern for criminals and their rights. He was so empathetic to victims he instantly responded to calls, day or night. Maybe a police officer gave his name to a new victim, or someone else was referred to him - whatever the case, Ted was there for them."

As I was working on this article, my mind went back to so many acts of kindness Ted bestowed that most people never knew about. I remember when the two little boys were murdered a few years ago and the family didn't have the means to bury them. Ted paid for their funeral and helped the family in several other ways.

When a police officer was shot several years ago, Ted provided transportation for the family so the wife could take their children to school. Because the media were camped outside the residence wanting information about the incident, Ted rented a house for them so they could have a private place for the officer's recuperation.

When my own Daddy died

of a heart attack while working in the field and I tried to resuscitate him, I inadvertently rubbed against poison ivy, to which I am violently allergic. I broke out in huge blisters and my respiratory system began to shut down. Ted made sure my family had all the resources we needed to ensure my complete recovery. I'll never forget what his kindness meant to me at that time.

No one knew how many times a police officer or firefighter retired and Ted underwrote the retirement dinner. And there were so many other things, so many victims who could tell about his catering food to their homes when they were devastated by murder, or after a trial when their energy was depleted by the ordeal and they didn't feel like cooking. JC Board Member Rev. Garry Wiggins recalled countless times when Ted picked up the tab for everyone with whom he dined. "He was a benevolent, generous man; he loved helping people."

What is the Justice Coalition doing to carry on that legacy?

We have a close working

relationship with law enforcement agencies in Northeast Florida (the Sheriff's offices of Duval, Clay, Baker, Nassau, St. Johns and Putnam counties, the FBI, FDLE and U.S. Marshals), with the State Attorney's Office, as well as elected officials in all areas of government. We've established this rapport by not having a hidden agenda, by exemplifying integrity in all our dealings with them and others, by earning their respect.

If you attend one of our TOGETHER WE CAN breakfasts, or if you are present at the Legacy dinner on Sept. 17, you'll notice there is no head table, or speaker's table. Ted believed everyone else, VIP or whoever, should take a back seat to victims; they were always to be the honored guests.

So all of us who work for the Justice Coalition, serve on its board or volunteer time and resources, pledge to carry on Ted Hires' legacy of compassion and determination to fight for the rights of innocent victims. Working together we CAN make a difference in our community.

## Faith Corner

*The Faith Community holds the key to true Restorative Justice for all mankind. Many churches and businesses support this concept. The Justice Coalition wishes to thank the following for their support in our quest for this goal of compassion and understanding:*

## Inspirational Thought



Blessed is he that considers the poor; the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth, and thou will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

Psalm 41:1-2

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