

Connelly Medal Presentation
2007 Kiwanis International Convention
Third House of Delegates
July 6, 2007

****Tucker****

Putting your own life at risk to save another deserves great honor. In Kiwanis, we do that by bestowing upon these brave and selfless people the Kiwanis International Foundation's Robert P. Connelly Medal for Heroism.

More than 600 Connelly Medals have been presented to individuals who acted as selflessly as Kiwanian Robert P. Connelly did when he lost his life to save another, 41 years ago. All of their stories are inspirational, but our next presenter has a very personal connection as well.

To tell us some of those stories and present this year's Connelly medal, please welcome President of the Kiwanis International Foundation, Ed Callis.

****Callis****

Thank you, President Nelson. It's my pleasure and honor to be here.

At our International convention in 2004, we welcomed to the stage the family of Connelly recipient Greg Griffith. Greg and two co-workers confronted a shotgun-wielding intruder who terrorized their office. Hoping to intervene and protect his employees, Greg found himself face-to-face with the gunman who immediately fired one blast, killing the courageous man.

Greg was a Boy Scout leader, the father of three children, and my son-in-law.

Like all Connelly medal recipients, Greg was one of those special individuals who, when faced with peril, selflessly risked his own life to save others. That's a common thread that weaves its way through the stories of all Connelly recipients. And many of the families we honor face the same tragedy our family did.

(Pause)

Today, I want to tell you about Jack Logan and Bert Alexander of Conway, Arkansas.

Jack and Bert were two missionaries who went missing in Nicaragua following a boating accident.

The duo was part of a 10-member fishing group whose boat capsized on Lake Nicaragua. As members of the group desperately tried to hold onto the boat, two younger men decided they would swim to a volcanic island they could see in the distance for help.

They grabbed a cooler that was floating by and left the group. In the rough water, though, they quickly began having trouble staying afloat.

Knowing they were the best swimmers in the group, Jack and Bert took an oar from the boat and swam out to save the two boys. After slipping the oar through the handles of the cooler, Jack got on one end of the oar and Bert on the other.

And with the boys still clutching the cooler, the four began swimming toward the island.

The four of them floated and swam through the night and into the next day. It became apparent after awhile, though, that the cooler was not going to be enough to support the four people and get them to safety.

Telling the boys, "You need to live; we're older and you need to live," Jack and Bert pushed off the cooler, sacrificing their own lives to save the lives of the young men.

We have some members of their families with us today to receive the Connelly Award on their behalf.

Please welcome Wanda Logan and her sons, Alan, Rusty and Boyd Logan

As well as Karen Alexander, her son, Dr. Parks Alexander, and her daughter and son-in-law, Ashlie and Jose Martinez.

****Tucker****

Thank you, Eddie. Thanks also to the Kiwanis Club of Conway, Arkansas, that nominated these recipients. And thank you especially to the families who were brave enough, in a different way, to join us today and let us publicly honor their loved ones. Stories like this help us put things in perspective. Let's acknowledge these men's sacrifices and celebrate their lives with another round of applause please.