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Work Injury Physician Honored for Humanitarian Acts and Contribution to Local Business Economy

Coronado resident, Dr. Lawrence S. Pohl, was a recipient of the Charlie Joiner Winning Spirit Award at a Black Tie gala held at the La Jolla Hilton Hotel on Friday, June 29. Benefiting Skill Centers of America, Founder and President Keith Davis says, "we honor individuals who have made an impact on our society. Their relentless quest to make a difference in other people's lives has made them winners." The award is presented to those who:

- Give of themselves individually to help their fellow men and women;
- Understand the importance of working as a team to achieve a mutual goal;
- Are passionate about their beliefs and who will persevere until their highest goals are realized;
- Recognize that thorough preparation is of paramount importance in overcoming adversity;
- Know that one person can make a difference and that one person can be you;
- Recognize all men and women as equals, deserving of opportunity and being capable of great achievement; and
- Know that winning without honor is not winning, and winning with honor is everything.



Dr. Pohl was born in Long Island, New York. He now resides in San Diego, California with his wife, Vida and his children Elizabeth, Jacqueline, Sarah and Antonino. His father emigrated from Poland, joined the United States Army and fought in WWII. His mother's family originated from Palestine. His only sibling, brother Mel Pohl is also a physician, specializing in Chemical Dependency.

Dr. Pohl attended the University of Buffalo for his Undergraduate degree and Medical School. He then obtained his Board Certification as a Family Medicine Specialist. He went on and trained in Washington D.C. where he served as a Public Health Officer. In 1995 Dr. Pohl went back to school and obtained his Masters in Public Health and Board Certification as an Occupational Medicine Specialist. *(Only 50% of applicants pass the test for certification!)* Dr. Pohl has two Board Certifications: Family Practice and

Occupational Medicine. These two certifications are exceedingly rare accomplishments as the majority of physicians struggle to obtain one Board Certification, and many do not have any.

Dr. Pohl had a private practice in Virginia for eight years. He then moved to San Diego when offered the position as Medical Director of Raleigh Hills Hospital, treating patients addicted to drugs and alcohol. Many physicians dislike treating the chemically dependent. In fact, quite a few physicians flatly refuse to treat the addicted patient. But Dr. Pohl found it to be some of the most rewarding work of his career. "It's so gratifying to see these patients turn their lives around." One grateful patient wrote to Dr. Pohl, "thank you for giving me my life back." Dr. Pohl's ever-present sense of social responsibility bloomed during this point

in his career.

In 1990, he started Mission Valley Medical Clinic, serving San Diego employers and their injured workers in addition to providing excellent and caring family medicine. Concerned about the financial hardship work injury expenses place on local businesses, he strives to help San Diego companies by maintaining tight control of their work comp expenditures, while providing appropriate and personal care to the injured worker. Dr. Pohl also serves as a Medical Review Officer, due to his chemical dependency expertise, evaluating drug tests for employers. Also due to his extensive knowledge of workman's compensation injury and claims, Dr. Pohl became a QME (Qualified Medical Examiner). As a QME, Dr. Pohl is qualified to review disputed work injury claims and make recommendations regarding appropriate care.

Dr. Pohl's dedication and his genuine unselfishness in helping people are ever constant. Just to name a few, Dr. Pohl sponsors four international foster children, from Haiti to Bolivia. He spends his holidays serving food to the homeless at the San Diego Rescue Mission. And his ultimate gift occurred on a Mother's Day during the late 1980's. Dr. Pohl decided that he too wanted to give the gift of life, and became a bone marrow donor. Two years later he was matched with a 6-month-old baby girl from Los Angeles whose life was threatened by Acute Leukemia. Dr. Pohl's donation saved her life and gave her ten more years with her grateful family.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. Pohl encouraged everyone to consider becoming a bone marrow donor, emphasizing the lack of donors in the African American, Hispanic and Native American communities. A simple blood test can lead to a match with someone who would otherwise lose his or her life.

When he is not saving lives, restoring injured workers to their careers, saving San Diego businesses money on ever-increasing work comp expenditures, fostering children, donating bone marrow and serving food to the homeless, he loves to play basketball. Rumor has it that he has a mean left hook shot!

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