

News Release
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WSEM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WSEM HONORS LAURA PEDERSEN AND BRAD ROLLER AT 16TH ANNUAL LAMPLIGHTER HUMANITARIAN AWARD DINNER

CLEVELAND (June 4, 2009) — West Side Ecumenical Ministry (WSEM), a Cleveland-based nonprofit providing real help, real hope and real futures to Clevelanders in need, has named husband and wife Laura Pedersen and Brad Roller its 2009 Lamplighter Humanitarian Award honorees. Pedersen and Roller will be honored at WSEM's 16th Annual Lamplighter Humanitarian Award Dinner, 6-9 p.m. on June 18 at Westwood Country Club, 22625 Detroit Road in Rocky River.

Each year, WSEM honors community leaders who have demonstrated a commitment to the area through their corporate and philanthropic efforts and WSEM's mission of helping individuals and families meet their needs. Pedersen and Roller join the ranks of 14 past honorees, including Maria and Sam Miller of Forest City Enterprises and Alex Machaskee of *The Plain Dealer*.

All funds raised during the event allow WSEM to help individuals and families become more self-sustaining through programs that provide emergency food and outreach services, employment training and placement, early childhood education and counseling solutions.

"Laura and Brad are inspiring individuals who are devoted to the betterment and growth of Cleveland and the well being of its residents in need," says Judith Z. Peters, president and CEO of WSEM. "They have given of their time and talents to help those in need through their volunteer work and leadership roles at Cleveland nonprofits like WSEM and the American Red Cross."

(More)

Roller serves as a chair of Vistage International, the world's leading chief executive organization, and founder and chairman of Swiger Coil Systems, Inc., the country's leading supplier of transit electrical equipment and electric motor coils. He is also the vice chairman and founding member of the Manufacturing Growth and Advocacy Network (MAGNET), the largest manufacturing advocacy organization in Ohio. Roller serves on the boards of the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the American Red Cross, WSEM and the Cleveland Opera. He is also a member of The First Tee of Cleveland, a nonprofit dedicated to positively impacting the lives of young people through golf. Additionally, Roller serves on the President's Advisory Council of Tulane University.

Previously, Roller served on the boards of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Ohio and the Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE). He earned a bachelor's in economics from Tulane University.

Pedersen, an internationally acclaimed opera singer and lyric soprano, has used her fame to raise funds for numerous nonprofits, including the American Red Cross, the Cleveland Opera and WSEM. She spent four years singing leading roles with the Bremen Opera Company in Bremen, Germany, returning to America to debut with our own Cleveland Orchestra Blossom Band, the Cleveland Pops at Severance and Opera Cleveland. She has sung in Opera Companies from New York to California and has had her solo debut at Carnegie Hall in New York. Pedersen was the winner of the District Metropolitan Opera National Auditions and was a finalist in the Great Lakes Regional Metropolitan Opera National Auditions. She earned a master's degree in vocal performance at the Cleveland Institute of Music and a bachelor's from Iowa State University.

The Lamplighter event will feature a silent auction, musical treasure chest, entertainment and a special performance by Pedersen. Tickets for the event are \$350. For more information on the Lamplighter Humanitarian Award Dinner, please contact WSEM at 216-651-2037.

About WSEM

Founded in 1966, West Side Ecumenical Ministry (WSEM) is a nonprofit, social service organization working to help individuals and families become more self-sustaining through programs that provide emergency food and outreach services, employment training and placement, early childhood education and counseling solutions. For more information, visit www.wsem.org.

About the Lamplighter Humanitarian Award Dinner

The WSEM Lamplighter Humanitarian Award was established in 1994 to celebrate a community of philanthropic leaders who exemplify integrity and demonstrate a commitment to the community through their philanthropic efforts. Past honorees have included Maria and Sam Miller of Forest City Enterprises and Alex Machaskee of *The Plain Dealer*.

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