

CHICAGOANS OF THE YEAR



>> Left: Kimo Williams and *Chicago* senior editor Cassie Walker; above: Dr. Todd Kuiken (at right) with his patient Jesse Sullivan and Sullivan's wife, Carolyn

Shared Experiences

Though tossed and blown, these nine Chicago dreamers never walked alone

BY ALEXIS MATTERA AND PAULINE SHIH

STANDING AT THE lectern in the ballroom of the Four Seasons Hotel Chicago, Art Smith hugged the painter Jesus Salgueiro, a cancer survivor and Smith's life partner. "Life is wonderful, life is beautiful," said an emotional Smith, perhaps best known as Oprah Winfrey's personal chef. "But if you don't have anyone to share it with, it's not so great."

Smith's comments came this past January as *Chicago* celebrated its Chicagoans of the Year for 2006. The nine honorees included

Smith and Salgueiro, who were chosen for creating Common Threads, an organization that uses food to teach children about the world's cultures. The magazine also honored Julieanna Richardson, founder of The HistoryMakers, an ongoing video archive of interviews with hundreds of African Americans. Keith Elliott and Harriet Ross were recognized for their annual Dance for Life benefit, which since 1992 has raised about \$3 million for HIV and AIDS causes.

Another honoree, the doctor and biomed-

ical engineer Todd Kuiken, expressed his gratitude toward his family, his team of technicians at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, and his lunch guest and patient Jesse Sullivan, who has been fitted with two of the prosthetic "bionic" arms designed by Kuiken. Maria Pesqueira, the CEO of the Pilsen social-service agency Mujeres Latinas en Acción, also shared her award with others. "When you honor me," she said, "you are really honoring those women who inspire me."

Over lunch, Kimo Williams, honored for his symphonic composition *Buffalo Soldiers*, discussed a possible collaboration with the violinist Rachel Barton Pine, COY class of 1995. Another 2006 honoree, the Night Ministry's Rev. Thomas Behrens, stressed community in his remarks. "Having a home is the most important thing for a youth but, unfortunately, some kids get lost," he said. "[The Night Ministry] is home in so many ways: to the homeless, to the staff, and to me."

All of which lent an added poignancy to the remarks about Chicago from the Venezuelan-born Salgueiro: "For the first time in my 27 years in the states," he said, "this is the place that I call home." ■



>> Above: Jesus Salgueiro and Julieanna Richardson; right (from left): *Chicago* publisher Randy Hano, Maria Pesqueira, Tribune Company vice president Owen Youngman, *Chicago* editor Richard Babcock, Art Smith, Salgueiro, Richardson, Kuiken, Keith Elliott, Williams, Harriet Ross, and Rev. Thomas Behrens

