

## Parents' Day Celebrated across the US with Panache

Jim Gavin  
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Secretary General, UPF-USA



*Parents' Day was honored in Minnesota at the Capitol Rotunda in St. Paul.*

The National Parents' Day Coalition celebrated Parents' Day in a variety of ways across the US during the month of July. The Coalition held two national-level awards ceremonies -- one on the East Coast in New Jersey and one on the West Coast in California.

On the East Coast, an elegant gala dinner with ballroom dancing was held July 20 at The Grove in Cedar Grove, New Jersey. Mrs. Lourdes Swarts, regional director of UPF-USA, coordinated this event along with Mr. Bob Beebe, Mr. Joe Coyne, and many others. Dr. Zal Velez, a former Deputy Mayor of West Orange, and his wife of 48 years, Dr. Josie Velez served as Co-Chairs for the Gala.



*UPF-USA Secretary General Jim Gavin and Mr. Steve Lonegan, Republican leader in New Jersey who gave the keynote speech at The Grove*

The awards ceremony was the highlight of the gala. Award winners hailed from many races, cultures and religious backgrounds. The pride of being recognized as an outstanding parent was evident in their happy demeanor.



*The Erlandson family matriarch was honored at the Pasadena City Hall.*

Mr. Beebe opened the program with welcoming remarks. Mr. Jim Gavin, Secretary General of UPF-USA, spoke about the history of Parents' Day. Steve Lonegan, a U.S. Senate candidate, congratulated the awardees and gave a moving story of his own upbringing and his parents' support for him when he became legally blind as a teenager. He attributed his success in business, in government as a three-term mayor, and in politics as a political candidate to his parents. Lonegan decried "an all-out assault on the sanctity of marriage and the family in this country," and said we cannot "replace moms and dads with government bureaucrats." See the coverage by the Verona Cedar Grove Times [here](#).

Mrs. Swarts congratulated the award winners and announced that Parents' Day in New Jersey would be celebrated at The Grove again next year.



*Seattle supporters of Parents' Day gathered on the steps of the Windemere Mansion.*

### **Parents' Day Ceremonies in California**

On the West coast a National Awards Ceremony was held in Pasadena (in Los Angeles County) at the Pasadena City Hall. The California Parents' Day Coalition hosted the event, headed up by Mr. Nasser Zomorod, the Southern California Director for UPF-USA, and Mr. Nat Nehdar, the Human Rights Commissioner for the City of Pasadena, who also emceed the program. Mr. Nehdar did a wonderful job of bringing the program together introducing the invocation, the musical presentations, the speakers, and the Award winners.

Mr. Gavin told the gathering how Parents' Day originated in America. Los Angeles County Sherriff Leroy "Lee" Baca gave the keynote address. He inspired the audience with stories of how his grandmother helped raised his mentally disabled brother and stories of the loving sacrifices of his mother, his father and his wife. He spoke about the importance of faith in raising children and the hard work that parents contribute to provide for a family. Mr. Zomorod and Mr. Gavin presented the awards to 25 award winners.



*Sam Rohrer, the keynoter at the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania event, with wife, Ruth Ann, their children and grandchildren.*

The Parents' Day Award Certificate was provided by the California State Assembly and was signed by Assemblyman Chris Holden of the 41st district. A staff member from Mr. Holden's office gave congratulatory remarks.

The proud and happy award winners and their families were all invited to "Pasadena House" of the local Family Federation for World Peace for a barbeque. Good food and good times were enjoyed by all, according to participants.



Parents' Day was celebrated in many other cities. At the State Capitol in St. Paul, Minnesota an Awards Ceremony was hosted by Mrs. Gudrun Gavin and Mrs. Karen Morehead, who head up the Minnesota Parents' Day Coalition. The awards were signed by the governor of Minnesota and the mayor of St. Paul and presented to the award winners by a representative from the governor's office and the county attorney's office.



*Parents Day supporters gathered in Indianapolis.*

A gala banquet with ballroom dancing at the Hershey Country Club in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, was hosted by Mrs. Swarts and the Pennsylvania Parents' Day Coalition. Sam Rohrer, president of the Pennsylvania Pastors' network, and who was himself the top honoree, said "I truly appreciate the Pennsylvania Family Coalition for their consistent commitment to defend the family and to lift up the important role of parents in the home. For Ruth Ann – my lovely wife of 36 years –our six children and eight grandchildren, being recognized for simply doing our best before God makes us thankful and humble."

Parents' Day was also celebrated in Dallas; New York; Fairfax, Virginia; Little Rock; Seattle; Chicago; Indianapolis; Las Vegas; Wheaton, California; and many other cities. The Wheaton event was covered by the Wheaton Citizen here.



*Los Angeles Sheriff Lee Baca was the keynoter at Parents' Day in Los Angeles County.*

The National Parents' Day Coalition is still receiving reports from these and other cities across the country. Pictures of Parents' Day Award winners will be featured on the [parentsday.com](http://parentsday.com) website.

The Parents' Day Award recipients are what really make these Award Ceremonies so special. In California, Patrick Elrlandson nominated his parents, Theodore and Mary Erlandson. Mrs. Erlandson carried a framed picture of her late husband as she walked up to accept the certificate. All who saw the delight in her face as she received the award were moved. Not only was she honored, but her whole family felt happy for their mother and grandmother.