

MIAMI TODAY

WEEK OF THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2011

WWW.MIAMITODAYNEWS.COM

\$5.00

12B MIAMI TODAY

BEST OF MIAMI

WEEK OF THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2011

Unsung heroes save jobs, aid nonprofits, guard legal rights

BY MARILYN BOWEN

Working quietly in the background without fanfare, Miami's unsung heroes can be found in various fields — ensuring the legal rights of the underrepresented, saving jobs or helping to move the community forward through philanthropy.

For nearly half a century, Attorney **Robert Parks** has been a strong voice for justice within the legal system, said Marcia Cypen, executive director of Legal Services of Greater Miami.

“Bob is an icon in the legal community,” she said. “Legal Services has been around for 45 years, and we get a lot of our funding from the government. As with any growing organization, we can't rely only on that if we want to have enough money and enough support in the community.”

Mr. Parks readily assented to be one of three co-chairs of Together We Must, the organization's recent fundraising campaign, she said, “and has thrown himself into it although he's still a very active trial lawyer and has a lot of other causes he's involved in — and when he asks people, it's hard for them to say no.”

Legal Services is charged with the responsibility of making sure that people of meager means have access to the system, Mr. Parks said.

“In my personal opinion, when you take the oath to become a lawyer this is what you are supposed to be doing, no matter how successful you are personally.

“This is not a political issue but a professional issue, and lawyers need to step up to the plate and do it. Legal Services has done an amazingly thorough and exemplary job, but we still have a long way to go, particularly in today's economy.”

Mr. Parks, who was admitted to the bar in 1964, has received numerous awards. Most recently, he was honored by the



Robert Parks was a co-chair of a funding drive for Legal Services.

Southern Trial Lawyers Association with the 2011 War Horse Award, its highest honor. The War Horse is given in recognition of extraordinary contributions to the cause of justice.