



**Major
General (Ret.)
Roger R. Blunt**



**Anthony R.
Jimenez**

2010 BUSINESS LEGEND AWARD

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a legend is a person whose fame promises to be enduring. The Business Legend Award honors MBEs whose legacies will endure for many years to come because of the continued long-term success of their businesses and their high-level of contributions in ensuring the success of others.

Our Legends have been chosen for their business acumen, performance excellence, courageous thinking and actions, vision and innovation, inspiring leadership, community mindedness, and their constant willingness to help those who follow. They have attained legendary status through their ability to succeed despite the daunting obstacles in their paths. They encountered a hostile, inhospitable business climate and became pioneers, trailblazing the road to change and equality in the business community. They've helped stabilize neighborhoods, provided support for hundreds of employees, and created legacies for their families.

The two extraordinary men who are this year's Business Legend honorees meet these criteria and have a passion for excellence that far exceeds the norm. They know what problems minority businesses face, what joys they have, and they care deeply about them. Through their efforts, they have made a lasting impact on the lives of many. They epitomize what every business owners aspires to be. These unsung heroes are our 2010 Business Legends.

Major General (Ret.) Roger R. Blunt

Blunt is fond of quoting fellow general, Secretary of State Colin Powell:

*“There are no secrets to success.
It is the result of preparation,
hard work, and learning from failure.”*

Major General Roger R. Blunt (Ret.), P.E. is President and Managing Member of Essex Construction, LLC. Throughout a distinguished career on the front lines of the military and the battlefield in business, Maj. Gen. Roger Blunt has learned his lessons well. He is an icon in the business community, a survivor of at least three recessions. In 2010, Blunt is defying the notion that people of his age should go into retirement. Nothing could be further from the mind of this astute and active businessman. He is always preparing for the next chapter, after all preparation is in his DNA.

The making of Roger Blunt could be an academy award winning movie. It started in East Providence Rhode Island the birthplace of Blunt’s parents and siblings. His parents knew each other growing up. His mother attended Howard and after a year returned home and married his father. He attributes his values, character and his solid foundation to his parents.

“My father and his father before him were superintendents of a paint manufacturing facility. In the summers I worked at that plant. One day I was standing looking out the window and I felt his hand on my shoulder looking past me and his words were, ‘Son, this isn’t a place for you’”.

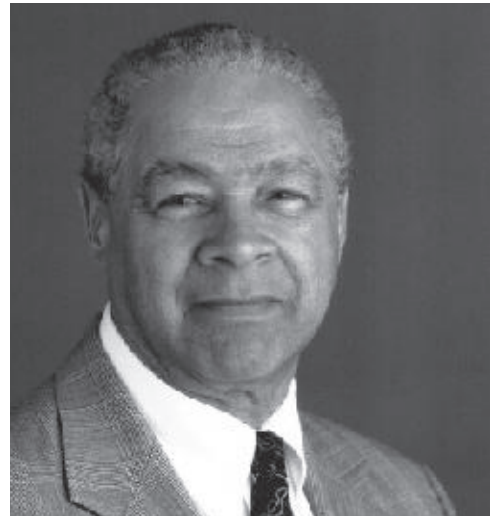
That was an ah ha moment for Blunt, realizing his father wanted him to be part of a larger horizon, something his father had not been able to achieve.

After completing two semesters at Brown University, Blunt left Rhode Island in the spring of 1951 and enlisted in the Army. “The draft was breathing down my neck, says Blunt. “If I had to be in the service I wanted to eat in the officer’s mess”, he adds with a smile. Blunt passed the examinations and went to basic training and leadership school. After that he was headed off to officer training school.

Blunt, the only African American in the class was the class leader in military aptitude. He spent more than thirty years in service to his country.

Blunt met his bride DeRosette Y. Hendricks on a blind date while at West Point. She was in an all girls school (Wheaton) where she was the only African American student in her class. A solid and loving couple until her death, they raised four children. Besides being his life partner for 52 years, Derrie Blunt was his business partner. He attributes his success to his wife and her business savvy.

Blunt’s resume of achievements is both lengthy and incredibly impressive. He has been engaged in civil engineering design and construction since 1972. He is a registered Professional Engineer in the District of Columbia; and, he has led the successful completion of more than \$500 million in construction projects. Blunt holds a Bachelor of



Science degree from the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, and two Master of Science degrees in Civil Engineering and Nuclear Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He also has an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore where there is a lecture series named after him. In 2002, he established the Roger R. Blunt Construction Management Endowed Fund to support student scholarships, student recruitment and an endowed chair.

When Roger Blunt gave up the security of an Army career for the uncertainty of business, he was fulfilling a lifelong dream. “When I was growing up in East Providence, Rhode Island, I believed that my destiny would be to own my own business,” he says.

Blunt found his opportunity with a Midwestern asphalt-road-building company that wanted to expand into the Washington area. In 1971 he invested his savings in Tyroc Construction and became president and owner of 51 percent of the stock in the company.

Blunt built Tyroc and its successor, Essex Construction, into one of the most successful minority-owned construction companies. Essex Construction does millions of dollars in business annually, including such projects as Ravens Stadium, Oriole Park, bridges and a state of the art Coca Cola plant.

Blunt’s road to success was not a smooth one. At one point, he needed a special type of sand that the District of Columbia government required for construction projects. Blunt sent a truck to one nearby supplier to pick up a load.

The truck came back empty. The supplier said he “had all the business he could handle” and refused Blunt’s order. Although Blunt was certain the man was discriminating against him because of his race, he simply found another supplier.

Tyroc ran into financial problems in the economic turndown of the early ’80s and filed for reorganization in 1986. Blunt started over, building a new business, Essex, while salvaging the old one. Today both are highly successful and are part of Blunt Enterprises. Now he is training the next generation of Blunts. Just this year he announced the promotion of his son Jonathan Blunt to Executive Vice President of Blunt Enterprises.

Blunt believes he had two advantages during the tough times. One was his late wife, Derrie, his partner in business as well as in life. The other was his military training: as a West Point graduate and an Army veteran, he knew how to work under fire.

Anthony R. Jimenez

A man's growth is seen in the successive choirs of his friends.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

It would be shorter to make a list of the recent awards Tony Jimenez's company MicroTech has not won than to list the awards it has won. Suffice it to say that MicroTech is head and shoulders above the pack of most IT companies –ranking in Washington Technology's 2010 Top 100 Federal contractors with more than \$186 million in federal contracts. Jimenez was also lauded as one of Federal Computer News' Federal 100 for 2010, a list containing the vanguard of nearly every critical government sector and public service mission you can name. Since its launch in 2004, MicroTech has been wildly successful. Jimenez expects to bill more than \$350 million this year.

Jimenez started MicroTech at his kitchen table after retiring from the military and a one-year stint at Unisys. The business was hobbling along until he brought in two partners who invested in the company based on Jimenez's character and vision. These partners still own 40% of the business.

Although Jimenez is justifiably proud of his business success, he is even more proud of what this success has allowed him to do for his community.

For the Veterans community, Tony Jimenez mentors other Service Disabled-Veterans, holding training seminars, and providing counseling on professional opportunities. He also is a lifetime member of the *American Legion, Veterans for Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans.*

"I enjoy creating something from nothing and teaching other people how to do so. I am comfortable being a role model for other Hispanic and disabled veteran business owners because I know I have the passion to help them succeed."

Jimenez's success is not just limited to business. Jimenez married his childhood sweetheart when he was 18, and she was 16. Despite the odds against couples marrying at such a young age, Jimenez and his wife are celebrating their 36th wedding anniversary this year. The couple's two children, and their spouses, all work at MicroTech and have made Jimenez and his wife grand-parents of five girls.

Jimenez attributes his successes to his parents and his many role models.

"My father was in the military and Hispanics did not have a voice then, so he taught us to keep our heads down, work hard and assimilate. Through my career I have always had bosses that have encouraged me. I am still in touch with most of these bosses."



Jimenez believes in leaving people better than when he found them. This transcends to his more than 400 employees whom he leads with authenticity and compassion.

"I personally get 20-30 resumes a week", says Jimenez. "Most of them are from the friends and family of my current employees. It is wonderful that MicroTech is considered such a good place to work that my employees recommend it to their best friends or their siblings."

Looking back at the recent past, Jimenez considers his finest moments the times Presidents Bush and Obama asked to meet with him to elicit his advice on some business issue.

"It amazes me to think that two Presidents of the United States wanted my opinion. It doesn't matter whether I am a democrat or a republican; the opportunity to advise two presidents was definitely the best thing that ever happened to me since I founded MicroTech."

Jimenez prides himself on the fact that his success hasn't changed him at all. The only major purchases Jimenez has made is a slightly larger house and a slightly better car.

"I want to make sure that I stay approachable so I can continue to help people as much as I can. I think people are surprised when they meet me, or see me again after a long absence, to find that I'm still as friendly as ever."

Jimenez is also a notable leader in fundraising activities for numerous injured Veterans' causes like the *Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund*. He sits on the Board of the *National Economic Commission of the American Legion* advocating for increased benefits for members and veterans. MicroTech lends countless hours of support to the American Legion's "*Heroes to Hometown*" program – a transition assistance program for service members who were severely injured in the *Global War on Terrorism*.

With all of his accomplishments, you would think Jimenez would be complacent, or at least thinking about retirement. However, Jimenez says, "What keeps me up at night is the fear that I'm not doing enough; not giving back enough. My operations manager says I am too generous, but I never quite feel like I'm generous enough."