

# 2014 TLPA Paratransit & Contracting Driver of the Year



SCR Medical Transportation President Stan Rakestraw Congratulating Ronald L. Smith, Chicago, IL

Patience and customer care heads to a new level when Chicago-based SCR Medical Transportation, Inc. driver Ronald Smith is behind the wheel.

Some customers require more attention than others, and that doesn't hinder Smith's ability to treat each passenger with the level of care each requires.

Mrs. Jones is one such client. She requires extra assistance that starts at her front door. From putting on her coat to walking her through the grocery store, Mrs. Jones has come to lean on Ronald to help with her every day tasks. And because she doesn't have relatives that live nearby, Ronald has become like family to her.

"I practically had to run through the store with her shopping list to gather the items that were needed because she was unable to get it done on her own," Ronald says. "Anytime anyone interacted with Mrs. Jones, 'above and beyond' was always important."

Ronald's patience and commitment to customer service led the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association (TLPA) to name him the 2014 TLPA Paratransit and Contracting Driver of the Year. He will accept the award at this year's 96th annual TLPA Annual Convention & Trade Show at the Grand Hyatt/Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas, on October 19.

"I am truly humbled," Ronald says. "This award is bigger than me. It reflects the company and supports the mission and values that are placed in motion by SCR owners."

Smith wasn't always a paratransit driver. Born and raised in Chicago, Ronald started his career at the young age of fifteen. He worked for the Chicago Sun-Times as an assistant to the truck driver and was then promoted to drive the truck himself, delivering newspapers in the early morning hours. Ronald stayed with the newspaper for 18 years. Along the way, Ronald

had his first child—the beginning of an impressive family that could be their own football team lineup, with six girls and five boys.

Helping others has always been a part of Ronald's personal ethos. In 1998, Smith made the tough decision to leave his job at the Chicago Sun-Times to help take care of his mother who was battling cancer. In 1999, he started his next adventure as a part-time driver with UPS. He joined SCR Medical Transportation in 2000.

Ronald started his new job at SCR with a lift vehicle. He quickly learned that clients have different challenges that would require him to consistently go the extra mile to assist them. He credits his experience with, and compassion toward, his mother as she struggled with her illness for making him a driver who truly understood passengers' needs.

"Working with passengers who have disabilities is a challenge I welcome," Ronald says. "You must stay focused and remember you have been given the opportunity to help and serve others."

In addition to his clients, working for a good company is another reason why Ronald loves his job. In his 14 years with SCR, Ronald has seen numerous changes in technology and passenger needs. When Ronald started his career, SCR completed 700 rides each day. Demand has grown so much that the company now proudly transports 4,500 passengers every day.

"Growth is good,"

Ronald says. "When I joined SCR, we had about 50 drivers. Now there are over 600, with no ceiling on the possibilities."

Ronald says he also has a keen sense of pride in working for an African-American-owned company. He adds that SCR has always been willing to go the extra mile to help all of its employees, and the company's supportive environment is reflected in the professionalism of the service. That, plus what he credits as a good "upbringing," is what makes him a proud and successful paratransit driver.

"This job enforces the natural essence of the human heart," Ronald says. "Lives are placed in our hands daily, and safety is of the utmost concern."

In his spare time, Smith loves spending time with his wife of 11 years and caring for their large family. One of his hobbies is tending to his home aquarium—he says that caring for fish is an excellent method of relaxation.

Smith lives by the mantra, "Whatever you do in life, be the best at it." He strongly believes that if you are responsible and take care of business first, everything else will fall in line.

In recognition of exceptional dedication to professionalism, customer service and safety, the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association is proud to honor **Ronald L. Smith as the 2014 TLPA Paratransit and Contracting Driver of the Year.** ■

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—Ronald L. Smith