

SOUTH FLORIDA SunSentinel

BOCA TIMES COMMUNITY NEWS

Basketball Hall of Famer 'inspires' to the tune of \$375K for YMCA



Bill Walton, Basketball Hall of Famer and Emmy award-winning broadcaster, was all smiles during the YMCA of South Palm Beach County's 20th annual Inspiration Breakfast in which the community raised a total of \$374,885 benefitting the Y's Financial Assistance and Youth Development programs. (Carlos Aristizabal/Courtesy)

Legendary Basketball Hall of Famer and Emmy award-winning broadcaster Bill Walton was on hand recently as the featured speaker for the YMCA of South Palm Beach County's 20th annual Inspiration Breakfast and helped the "Y" raise a total of \$374,885.

The breakfast, which took place at the Peter Blum Family YMCA, is the "Y's" largest event raising funds for their Financial Assistance and Youth Development programs.

“I am here to help raise consciousness, awareness and resources for the ‘Y,’” Walton said during a press gathering before breakfast. “I am a ‘Y’ member and the ‘Y’ has saved my life. I know when I get to the ‘Y,’ I have made it to the promised land.”

Walton began his basketball career as a star athlete at UCLA and then played for two NBA Championship teams — the Portland Trail Blazers and Boston Celtics.



Jerry Fedele, former Boca Raton Regional Hospital president, and Terry Fedele meet keynote speaker Bill Walton during the YMCA of South Palm Beach County's 20th annual Inspiration Breakfast. (Carlos Aristizabal/Courtesy)

His rise to success came with many challenges such as a lifelong stuttering affliction until he was 28 and a foot disorder that led to 39 surgeries — sidelining him for over half his NBA career. He then went on to become an Emmy-winning broadcaster before becoming active with many nonprofits.

The Inspiration Breakfast event gathers business and community leaders in support of the YMCA of South Palm Beach County. Past keynote speakers included Desmond Howard, Joe Theismann, Dara Torres, Mark Richt, Jason Taylor, Alonzo Mourning, Jim Kelly and Shannon Miller, among others.

“With the constant goal to strengthen our community by providing vital resources and programs to those in need, the ‘Y’ is incredibly thankful to our neighbors for continuing to support our cause every year,” said Jason Hagensick, president and CEO of the YMCA of South Palm Beach County. “Celebrating our 20th Inspiration Breakfast, we were honored to have Bill Walton deliver his message of inspiration and encouragement.”

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(1,229,879 online viewers)