

MAKING A difference

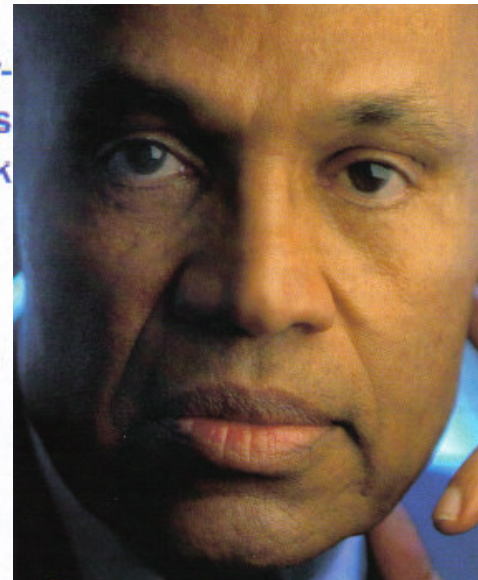
Through their philanthropy, these 23 people and couples are improving the human condition throughout Delaware. Fortunately for us all, it's unlikely they're going to stop anytime soon. by Bob Yearick
photographs by Pat Crowe

Delaware is a prosperous state, redolent of the old money of American industrial royalty, as well as the new money generated by banks, the legal profession, construction and land development.

That prosperity has begotten generosity. Last year 411 Delawareans each donated at least \$10,000 to the United Way. That's more than any other area of the country with a population of 1 million or less. Indeed, a sense of noblesse oblige—a true philanthropic spirit—seems to pervade the First State.

The most important kind of philanthropy is that which effects change for the better, whether it's feeding the poor, sheltering the homeless, providing a college education, assisting the learning disabled, or listening reflectively to the friendless. It usually manifests itself in the form of money, but true philanthropists give countless hours of their time as well. In fact, they seem to be serial volunteers. They see a need. They get involved.

Following are profiles of 20 individuals and couples who have created change up and down the state. We present them neither as the best nor the most generous, though they may very well fit both adjectives, but as examples of what can be done with time, money and creativity to improve the human condition. We're fully aware that many worthy candidates have been left off this list. In fact, one or two of the 20 profiled here probably would prefer to remain anonymous, but we are outing them just the same.



Tithing? **BANGALORE T. LAKSHMAN** might scoff, were he the scoffing type, at giving just 10 percent of one's income to charity. A native of India, he came to the United States in 1968, earned a master's degree from the University of Delaware in 1971, then spent 22 years with Artesian Water, eventually becoming chief engineer. In 1980, when his annual salary was \$20,000, he began donating half to charity. Through his BTL Foundation, he has provided more than 35,000 holiday meals, as well as food baskets and clothing, to the needy in Wilmington and cities in surrounding states. He borrowed money from his pension fund to help the Ministry of Caring purchase buildings that serve as transitional shelters. He also funds scholarships at the University of Delaware for needy engineering students. As governor of Rotary International for 1992-93, Lakshman was a catalyst for giving by initiating a fundraising project that helped provide health-related services in five countries.