



*Celebrating Life*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - August 3, 2007

**Contact:**

Pamela C. Clark, Ed.D.  
(W) 276-656-0290  
(F) 276-656-0261  
(C) 540-520-8468

**Ms. Wheelchair Virginia selected as 2007 Tony Mullins Courage Award recipient at Ms. Wheelchair America Program**

Fishersville, VA - Miss Buddy Hayes, CTRS represented the Commonwealth of Virginia at the 35<sup>th</sup> Ms. Wheelchair America program on July 28<sup>th</sup> in Bethesda, Maryland. Hayes also was given the Tony Mullins Courage Award for the best speech that showed heroism and courage. There were 27 contestants representing as many states and Washington DC. This week long event consisted of table presentations describing the contestants state and self, three days of interviews, educational workshops, and a speech presentation on each contestant's platform of advocacy. The five finalists had interviews on stage before the new Ms. Wheelchair America was chosen.

The new Ms. Wheelchair America 2008 is Alana Yvonne Wallace of Chicago, Illinois. Alana is 55 and had polio as a child; she is married with four grown kids. Alana is the first African American MWA since the 70's. She founded a professional physically integrated dance company. She worked with the arts and arts as a wheelchair user.

Fourth runner-up was Arkansas; Third runner-up was Texas, Second runner-up was Massachusetts. First runner-up was Arizona.

Born in Fremont, Nebraska; Buddy now resides in Chesapeake, Virginia with her service dog, Ellie. An obviously determined, motivated, and funny woman with a zest for life, Buddy's diverse background is highlighted by her service in the U.S. Army - as a heavy equipment operator. She is a Certified Therapeutic Recreational Specialist (CTRS) having received her BA degree from Virginia Wesleyan College in 1990. Buddy uses her wheelchair due to Multiple Sclerosis. When she is not out participating, competing, or just plain challenging herself in most any wheelchair sport imaginable, Buddy devotes

much of her time advocating on behalf of people with disabilities. She is a member of the PVA (Paralyzed Veterans of America), a national motivational speaker, an accomplished athlete, and volunteers her time and talents to a long list of organizations and Boards. Buddy became Ms. Wheelchair Virginia on April 14, 2007 at Woodrow Wilson Rehab Center in Fishersville, Virginia. In the three months that Buddy has represented Virginia she has traveled over 1,000 miles throughout our state speaking at various engagements with the invitation of many future opportunities to advocate for Virginians. Buddy's platform is "Sports and Recreation for everyBODY". Her personal motto is "Desire to Inspire".

Ms. Wheelchair Virginia is a non-profit organization that focuses on the accomplishments of Virginians with disabilities. The mission is to educate, advocate, and raise awareness of the abilities and needs of the disability community; but more importantly, to inspire and motivate Virginians as role models of courage and hope.

Ms. Wheelchair Virginia is always looking for engagements and guest appearances to speak. The program is also searching for contestants (women, age 21-60, Virginia residents, who use their wheelchair 100% of public mobility) for the next program in April 2008 at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center Auditorium. Those interested in booking engagements, becoming a sponsor, or becoming a contestant can contact the Ms. Wheelchair Virginia office at 1-800-345-9972 ext. 7905 or at [contactmwva@verizon.net](mailto:contactmwva@verizon.net). For more information on the Ms. Wheelchair Virginia program visit [www.mswheelchairva.com](http://www.mswheelchairva.com).