

## I champion Albany public schools because...

### The opportunity:

"My whole career has been focused on building affordable housing in Arbor Hill, and it was only natural that I would turn from housing to schools. I developed an interest in volunteering and was on the Albany Board of Education from 1976 to 1981. It's easy to see that there is a much more ethnically diverse student population now than there was 30 years ago. Teachers, administrators and volunteers need to be abreast of that fact and, to that effect, we need to be searching for culturally relevant teaching materials that students can react to positively.

"It's my opinion that we need to make every effort we can to incorporate African-American culture, literature and history into the curriculum. I'm interested in doing the right thing professionally, and it's professionally the right thing for educators to listen to and become conversant in the history and culture of their students. In the business world, we call those our customers. And we have to listen to our customers. So if our customers come from a particular background or heritage, to teach them about the wider world is to speak in a language that they can understand."

### The achievement:

"I'm of the school that the glass is half full and that if you stimulate students in a culturally sensitive way, you engage them in a way that traditional teaching methods might not. The Touhey Family Foundation awards grants to teachers and schools who pursue culturally relevant teaching projects and initiatives. Our grants are meant to be challenges to the system to come up with those creative ideas that the students will respond to.

"Recent test scores show that current initiatives that the City School District of Albany is pursuing, like the National Urban Alliance, are on the right track. The district is listening carefully and becoming sensitive to the history and culture of students and they understand that students respond positively to curriculum and activities that they see themselves in."

**Charles Touhey is managing partner of The Latham Four Partnership, which manages apartments, offices and distribution facilities in Arizona, Florida, New York and Texas. He is also the president of The Spare Room Inc., a storage facility in Albany, and vice president of the Orange Motor Company, Albany's largest Ford dealership. Mr. Touhey is a professor in the Africana Studies Department at the University at Albany.**

**In 2002 Albany Mayor Gerald D. Jennings selected Mr. Touhey to work on the Arbor Hill Revitalization Task Force, and he is currently overseeing the building of 50 owner-occupied two-family homes.**

**Mr. Touhey has served on a number of boards and has been extremely involved in philanthropic activities, most notably as an elected member of the Board of Education in Albany (1976-1981) and as chairman of the Board of Trustees of WMHT Public Television (1991-1995). He is also a board member for the Center for**



**Charles Touhey**  
**Managing Partner, The Latham Four Partnership**  
**President, Spare Room Inc.**  
**Vice President, Orange Motor Company, Albany**

**Law and Justice and a trustee for The College of St. Rose.**

**In 2007 the Touhey Family Foundation supplied more than 150 Albany public school teachers with culturally responsive teaching materials. This year, through a grant to Donors Choose, the foundation funded culturally responsive teaching proposals designed by Albany public school teachers.**