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# PRESS RELEASE

*Schneider to receive first Vanguard Media Award for Contributions in Law and Aging April 30, at the Country Club of Lansing*

**Lansing, April 29, 2010:**

Legal advocates are some of the most generous professionals, although the public is often unaware of their generosity. Many contribute freely to charitable causes, and professionally, they also share their intellectual minds, performing hours- worth of pro bono work free of charge. Then there are the never-ending committee and caucus hours they endure to remedy social and legislative injustice. Once in a while someone outside the legal arena, such as Lansing journalist John Schneider, makes such an important leadership contribution to the image of older adults, that the advocates honor him as one of their own.

On April 30, 2010, John Schneider will be recognized by Elder Law of Michigan at its annual Law Day Call to Justice Award Luncheon with a new award, the Vanguard Media Award for Contributions in Law and Aging. This tribute is given to thoughtful and responsible people or organizations in the media who positively portray the challenges and opportunities of growing older or living with disabilities; and for protecting people at points of vulnerability.

John Schneider watches over people who are vulnerable. It is his instinct. The thirty-three year veteran of Michigan's *Lansing State Journal* is also a U.S. Veteran, having learned to protect our country with the wits and weapons given to him by Uncle Sam. Today however, his weapons-of-choice are words. He is the author of the book *Waiting for Home; the Richard Prangle Story*, in which he tells the real-life trials of a developmentally disabled man who was wrongly institutionalized for fifteen years. In his Lansing newspaper column, John frequently warns readers about the latest scams and identity thefts; as well as other ugly hallmarks of twenty-first century crime.

Regular readers to John Schneider's column are familiar with the Lansing-area cabbie who Schneider has nicknamed "Cab Man" -- someone he considers a Superman-type hero for imparting common sense rationality at moments when it is most needed. Every so often he gets a call from Cab Man who is transporting a senior to a site where he or she can wire money overseas in the name of a local friend or relative who is down on their luck, presumably while out of the country. Together Cab Man and Schneider talk the senior through the hoax, convincing the passenger to verify the current location of their friend or loved one first. It has saved hundreds of precious dollars for his readers.

Regarding scams, Schneider says, "seniors are particularly vulnerable because many are at a stage in life when they are not thinking clearly or their reflexes aren't as good." But he also knows there's another reason why so many are targeted. "This generation wants to be polite. They are reluctant to be rude to other people."

When a senior is approached by an unscrupulous person offering to help or by an email from "a friend" in dire straits halfway around the world asking for money, many politely respond by handing over their credit card, or worse yet, their bank, or social security numbers, believing that they are doing something noble. Schneider continues to expose these scams in order to end them.

The award ceremony will be from approximately 12:40 to 1 PM at the Country Club of Lansing. Pre-event photos or filming can also be done between 11:30 am and noon.

Written by Karen McLaren, McLaren & Associates and Kate White, Executive Director, Elder Law of Michigan.