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Albert Demming

Card shop owner, youth mentor

April 28, 2008 As the owner of Demming's Hallmark Shop in Bolingbrook, Albert Demming helps his customers touch people's lives through greeting cards and gifts. [Recommend](#)

The work suits him. Being of service to others has always been his passion, he said, especially the time he spends motivating, inspiring and encouraging young people to reach their full potential.

Born and raised in Newark, N.J., Demming, 55, of Naperville, is the fifth of seven children. He has a degree in economics from Rutgers University and worked in the information systems and technology fields for AT&T and Accurate Information Systems for 14 years before he took advantage of the opportunity to purchase the Hallmark Shop in the Fox Valley Mall in 1995. Four years later, he opened a second Demming's Hallmark store in Bolingbrook. He sold the Aurora shop in 2005.

He is a basketball and softball coach and serves as a mentor and motivator in initiatives throughout Districts 203 and 204. He is a member of The 100 Black Men of Chicago Inc. and a coordinator of its Leadership Academy which provides mentors to 25 Waubonsie Valley High School students. He also is planning chairman for its annual College Scholarship Fair.

Demming is a board member of the Quad County Urban League, which supports academic achievement, job placement and training, cultural enrichment and equal access to employment and housing for low-income and displaced residents of DuPage, Kane, Kendall and Will counties. Earlier this month, that organization presented him with its Trailblazer Award for his humanitarian efforts at its Equal Opportunity Awards Dinner. Through the Urban League and The 100 Black Men of Chicago, he helped bring about free preparatory ACT and SAT college entrance examinations and follow-up strategy sessions for west suburban students.

Demming is a lifetime associate member of the National Black MBA Association and a volunteer judge for the NAACP's annual DuPage County Afro-Academic Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics competition.

Married to his wife, Susan, for 15 years, he is the father of daughters Danielle, 23, Taylor, 12 and Briana, 9.

1. Do people still prefer expressing their feeling through greeting cards?

Very much so. There are other avenues available now, online and things such as that. But there's still a huge desire to come in and physically purchase a card, fill it out and send it off. ... I think it has died down somewhat based on technology but, for the most part, there's still a huge desire to purchase and fill out a card. (Technology's) had an impact. How large an impact is tough to say because there's some folks who, for the sake of time, will send an e-card. Others will come in on a given day and purchase 20, 30 cards anticipating birthdays and anniversaries down the line.

2. Why does a card in the mail trump an e-card?

People enjoy receiving gifts, especially when it's a surprise. I enjoy opening up mail. I enjoy opening gifts and I think most folks that I know feel the same way, especially if it's from someone you haven't seen or heard from for awhile. ... I think that whole social expression is still within us, just in terms of knowing that someone is thinking about you. I think that goes a long way.

3. Why do you enjoy working with young kids so much?

It's something I did not have available to me growing up and it's something I feel I'm in a position to share, just in terms of the value of education, the value of developing leadership-type skills, various etiquette skills and things such as that. It's something that I feel I can give back to the community, that capacity of sharing some of the things I've been fortunate to attain as a mentor.

4. Who was your biggest role model?

My mom was very instrumental in terms of my work ethic. I take a lot of value in my word. If I say I'm going to do something, as best as I can, I do it. And as I've come along the way, either reading a book or something like that, certain things kind of inspire me to keep on pushing.

5. What is your personal philosophy?

What I share with the kids is 'aim high and dare to dream.' That's something I feel very strongly about. I try to instill that in my girls - not to feel as if they cannot accomplish something if they put their minds and hearts to it. I'm very passionate about the things I do involve myself in.

If you would like to see someone featured in 5 Questions, contact Kathy Millen at kmillen@scn1.com or 630-416-5204.

n johnson wrote:

Mr. Demming has provided outstanding leadership and has demonstrated exemplary professionalism via his mentoring of students at Waubonsie Valley High School in Aurora, IL. He is a true inspiration for all students and mentees alike. We are truly fortunate that he stopped by our way. Thanks Mr. Demming and KUDOS!Regards,N
Johnson

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