

Celebrating Walter Cronkite

By Naomi Pallas



Martha's Vineyard Times file photo

Josue Cruz Morales, a founding member of the Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative, accepts the award named after the skipper in the picture at his feet. To the right are Walter Cronkite IV and Ed Jerome, former principal of the Edgartown School.

for almost 10 years.

“The opportunity to have this man as our honorary chairperson was a powerful motivation for our young people to fight for our own well-being,” said Josue Cruz Morales, one of the Walter Cronkite Award winners and a founding member of the Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative (VYLI). VYLI and MVYLI are projects of the Stone Soup Leadership Initiative, whose mission is to create educational tools and training for young leaders to work together to build a better world.

Mr. Cronkite’s grandson, Walter Cronkite IV, presented the awards to Mr. Morales and Chris Pitt, a junior at Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School. Mr. Pitt recorded a film of the Vineyard Youth Summit, an intensive leadership training which was held from June 26 to July 2 at the Menemsha Inn.

“Winning this award was one of the best moments in my life,” said Mr. Pitt. “Walter Cronkite knew there was a lot of power in the media, and my video brings that to life. Now people know what MVYLI is trying to do.”

The life of Walter Cronkite — long-time CBS anchorman, Vineyard sailor, and friend of many Islanders — was celebrated at the Whaling Church in Edgartown on Sunday evening, July 18. Born in 1916 in St. Joseph, Missouri, Mr. Cronkite died in July 2009. Organized by the Stone Soup Leadership Institution in partnership with the Rotary Club of Martha’s Vineyard, the public event was marked by the presentation of the first Walter Cronkite awards to two young activists and the launch of the Martha’s Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative (MVYLI.)

The event honored not only Mr. Cronkite’s life as a journalist and his many summers spent living and sailing on Martha’s Vineyard, but also his efforts to prepare youth for the future as honorary chairman of the Stone Soup Leadership Institution

