

Billy Zane's Parents Accused Of Cheating Students After They Closed Down Medical School

Actor Billy Zane's parents have been accused of ripping off students after they shut down a medical college without warning, taking \$30,000 in tuition fees. William and Thalia Zane allegedly closed down Chicago's Medical Careers Institute and disappeared after collecting money for the upcoming semester. Several of the around 60 students tried to track the couple down, but they were informed that they had moved back to

Greece.

In late October, the 31-year-old school, owned by the couple, suddenly closed down. The students were left with no diploma, untransferable credits and unpaid student loans.

Student Valier Ramirez told the National Enquirer, "It was a huge shock for everyone. I showed up for class one day and there was an angry mob of students trying to figure out

what happened."

"William and Thalia disappeared with our money. I lost \$4,000, not to mention the six months of training I have no credit for - and they gave us no explanation whatsoever." The school's attorney, Arthur Evans, simply said that the school "went out of business. There are businesses closing every day now." The Illinois Board of Education and attorney general's office are now investigating the matter.



NSW AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

Glenn McGrath AM, Lorraine Peeters, Kurt Fearnley OAM, Dr Jamal Rifi

A cricketing legend, a stolen generation survivor and healer, an inspiring Paralympian and founding member of Muslim Doctors Against Violence have been named as the NSW recipients in the Australian of the Year Awards 2009.

National Australia Day Council Chairman Adam Gilchrist presented the recipients with their awards in a ceremony this evening and congratulated all finalists on having earned such a prestigious honour from their fellow NSW citizens.

The NSW award recipients are:

The NSW Australian of the Year 2009 is cricketer and fundraiser Glenn McGrath AM.

Glenn McGrath is one of Australia's most loved cricketing legends. Since first wearing the baggy green cap in Perth in 1993, he has gone on to become the most prolific fast bowler in test cricket history, spearheading Australia's bowling attack for over a decade. Professionally he has always demonstrated an unerring will to succeed, but off the field it is the way he has handled personal struggles that has gained him admiration. Glenn's wife, Jane, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1997, cancer of the hip six years later and had a brain tumour removed in early 2006. Together they established the McGrath Foundation, with an aim to provide funding for breast care nurses on a national basis and provide greater public awareness of breast cancer, particularly amongst younger women. The McGrath Foundation is now a major fundraiser for and supporter of people with breast cancer. In June this year Jane lost her 11-year battle with cancer, leaving Glenn to care for their two children. Throughout it all Glenn has shown enormous strength and dignity, setting an inspirational example.

The NSW Senior Australian of the Year 2009 is stolen generation supporter Lorraine Peeters.

Like many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children of her generation, Lorraine Peeters was forcibly removed from her family at the age of four and placed in an institution.

Through the healing journey necessitated by this traumatic event, she became involved with helping others from the Stolen Generation. She developed the Marumali model of healing and in response to great demand she established a healing program called Winangali-Marumali in 2000, to support survivors of the Stolen Generation. Participants are empowered by the workshop and its model of healing. The program works in tandem with Link Up, which allows Indigenous people to trace lost family members, and Bringing Them Home counsellors. Recognising that those removed from their families are twice as likely to have been arrested, she also established the Marumali program in Victorian prisons. Since 2002, more than 250 participants have completed the program. Lorraine also played an important role in the National Apology given by the Prime Minister in 2008 to the Stolen Generations. Following the apology, she presented the Prime Minister with a glass coolamon, an Indigenous carrying vessel, to thank him for offering the apology. Lorraine has had a profound impact on helping members of the Stolen Generation to heal.

The NSW Young Australian of the Year 2009 is Paralympian Kurt Fearnley OAM. Born without the lower portion of his spine, as a child Kurt Fearnley

ignored his disability and joined in every sport possible. At the age of 14 he took up wheelchair racing and has since become an elite international athlete. His never-say-die attitude is truly inspirational. Competing in the marathon at the Athens Paralympics, he pushed his chair for the last five kilometres on a flat tyre to win gold. Then during the New York marathon in 2006 he hit a pot hole at full speed and crashed face first, but still went on to set a course record. In 2007, he won 10 out of the 11 international marathons he competed in, breaking six course records in the process. He is currently world champion in all five distances above 800m. Despite being disqualified in one final at the Paralympics in Beijing, given the wrong lane in another, and having his wheelchair bumped sideways down the track in a third, he took home one gold, two silver and a bronze medal. Kurt has an indomitable spirit and that is truly inspirational.

The NSW Local Hero of the Year 2009 is cultural leader Dr Jamal Rifi.

In 1984, Dr Jamal Rifi arrived in Australia to study. Despite facing challenges with the English language, he successfully completed his studies and qualified as a medical practitioner. Dr Rifi's generous nature and desire to give back to this country led him to become involved in serving the community, par-

ticularly in the areas of youth, family and community development. He was a founding member of Muslim Doctors Against Violence and the Christian Muslim Friendship Society. His efforts to build harmony between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities have been recognised with a Human Rights Medal. He is a former member of the NSW Medical Advisory Board and a community representative for the Youth Partnership with Arabic Speaking Communities. As the President of the Lakemba Sports Club, he has used sport as a social tool to build bridges between communities and channel young people's physical energies into positive activities. He trained the first group of youth from southwestern Sydney to become volunteer pool guards, and was instrumental in establishing a program, called On the Same Wave, to recruit and train Muslim youth as lifesavers at the Cronulla beaches. He also encourages young people to join the State Emergency Service, and in every way helps them to take positive career paths.

The National Australia Day Council congratulated all finalists on their achievements and acknowledged the recipients of this year's NSW awards for their outstanding contributions.

"The four NSW award recipients are inspirational figures who have touched hearts nationwide," said Tam Johnston, Director of the Australian of the Year Awards.

This year also marks the 30th anniversary of the Commonwealth Bank's involvement with the Australian of the Year Awards.

"It is the opportunity to acknowledge the work of outstanding Australians, like the New South Wales finalists, that makes the Group proud to be the Major Sponsor of the Australian of the Year Awards program for the last 30 years," said Ralph Norris, Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth Bank.

All NSW award recipients now become national finalists in their categories for the Australian of the Year Awards to be announced in Canberra on 25 January 2009.

