

Posted on Thu, Jan. 11, 2007

**HOMESTEAD**

## **Vegetable king recognized for charitable efforts**

### **Homestead farmer Paul DiMare will be named Miami's Humanitarian of the Year by the American Red Cross.**

By Rebecca Dellagloria

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He is one of the biggest producers of tomatoes in the country, but to those who know him best, Paul DiMare is regarded for something much grander: his generous spirit.

DiMare, president of DiMare Inc., is being recognized as Humanitarian of the Year by the American Red Cross of Greater Miami.

DiMare, whose family has been in the farming business in Florida since the 1940s and in Homestead since 1967, said he was touched.

"It's kind of humbling, but well appreciated," said DiMare, 65. "I'm just thankful that people would think that much about me to honor me."

DiMare was born into a farming family in Boston, where he began working in the repackaging business at 15. Since moving to Miami in 1963, he has been instrumental in Florida's farming industry, serving as chairman and co-founder of Florida Farmers Inc., an advocacy group for vegetable growers, and on the board of Farm Share, a nonprofit agency that distributes food to the needy. His company operates farms around the country, including in California and South Carolina.

But it is his work off the fields, as a philanthropist and humanitarian, that has gained him recognition from the Red Cross, said Gloria Danovitz, advancement officer for the Miami chapter.

DiMare is founder and trustee of the Paul J. DiMare Charitable Foundation, which contributes to various causes. He also is a strong supporter of the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, Fairchild Tropical Gardens and of the state's initiative to build affordable housing for farm workers.

DiMare also counts Women of Tomorrow, the University of Florida agricultural program and The Museum of Science as organizations he supports.

"He's involved in a lot of things throughout the state of Florida," Danovitz said. The award, she said, is "one of the most prestigious awards that the Red Cross gives."

The award will be presented to DiMare on Jan. 24 during a banquet at the JW Marriot Hotel, 1109 Brickell Ave. Last year's honoree, Carlos De Cespedes, founder of the Doral-based medical supplier Pharmed, will present the award to DiMare. Other past winners include developer Armando Codina, physician and public health advocate Dr. Pedro Jose "Joe" Greer and former Miami Herald and Knight Ridder executive Alvah Chapman Jr.

DiMare said his charitable bent was fostered in his youth, when he would ask his mother for money to give to needy children.

"I remember as a little kid going to Catholic school, giving \$5 a month to orphanages," he said. "It's something that has always been inside me to help people, and fortunately I've had the means to be able to do it."