

EDITORIAL: Thumbs up, thumbs down

By The Bee Editorial Board



Left to right, Jennings Brown, Wild Bill Begley, and George Dillard.

MARK CROSSE — THE FRESNO BEE [Buy Photo](#)

Thumbs down to **Eric Payne**, trustee for the State Center Community College District Board of Trustees, for embarrassing the region with his unethical, arrogant behavior and serving as a poor role model for the students. Interim Chancellor Bill F. Stewart addressed seven allegations filed against Payne in September. An investigation concluded Payne plagiarized a Bee column, made false accreditation concerns and was charged with a misdemeanor for using a disability placard to illegally park at a board meeting.

Thumbs up to **Ryan Wendell** of the New England Patriots, the 10th former Fresno State football player to win a Super Bowl. A graduate of Diamond Bar High School, he is proof: Valley kids, you *can* get there from here.

Thumbs up to **Ray Steele Jr.**, former president and publisher of The Fresno Bee, for winning the annual Leon S. Peters award, presented by the Fresno Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber surprised him with the announcement at what Steele thought was a lunch with Fresno State President Joseph Castro on campus. Gotcha!

The award recognizes business success and leadership as well as public service, contributions and investments in the Fresno area. The award will be presented formally at the 36th annual Valley Business Awards Luncheon March 11 at New Exhibit Hall in downtown Fresno. Bravo!

Thumbs up to actor **Sharon Leal**, a former Fresnan, for being selected as a presenter for Friday's 46th NAACP

Image Awards at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. Other presenters for the show included Oprah Winfrey, Laurence Fishburne, Angela Bassett and David Oyelowo, star of the Oscar-nominated film “Selma.” A former performer for the Good Company Players, Leal is a Roosevelt School of the Arts graduate who has worked on the TV shows “Boston Public” and and the film “Dreamgirls” among her projects.

Thumbs up to the **four Valley veterans** who were given long-overdue Prisoner of War medals and honors Monday at Fresno’s Veterans Affairs Medical Center Community Living Center. The honorees were Jennings Brown, Wild Bill Begley and George Dillard, who attended the ceremony, and Thomas W. Richardson, who could not be there. Members of VFW Clovis Post No. 3225 discovered the four vets living at the medical center never received POW awards after their service and spearheaded the effort to earn them recognition.

Thumbs up to **Anheuser-Busch** for donating 2156 cases of emergency drinking water to Porterville residents suffering through the drought. Many lost their indoor plumbing when their wells went dry, More than 900 private wells have dried up in the county.

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