

*For Immediate Release...*

**[WWW.DEPRESSION.ORG](http://WWW.DEPRESSION.ORG) DONATES 15K ON BEHALF OF MERRILL,  
DUNCAN HONORED**

Annapolis, MD June 22, 2006 - iFred ([www.depression.org](http://www.depression.org)), an Annapolis-based 501(c)3 nonprofit today reaches out to The Merrill family to express their condolences on their recent loss with a \$15,000 check to the Kristin Brooks Hope Center ([www.hopeline.org](http://www.hopeline.org)) that raises money for suicide awareness. Philip Merrill, the owner of the Capital Gazette and The Washingtonian, took his own life last week after battling heart issues and depression. iFred's mission is to reduce the stigma associated with depression – the leading cause of suicide in America today. This donation comes just a day before the news that Doug Duncan, candidate for Governor of Maryland, announces his withdrawal from candidacy due to clinical depression.

Jim Estepp, an advisory board member of iFred and President of the Greater Prince George's Business Roundtable and Past President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs states: "Our organization is deeply saddened by the loss of a great Maryland leader and philanthropist Phil Merrill. Our fundamental belief is that if we can eliminate the shame and stigma associated with mental illness, people will seek help prior to having such a tragic end to life. Experts indicate that 80% of depression responds to treatment, so if we can get people in seeking help we can reach them before it is too late."

Jim goes on to say, "I am thankful that my good friend of many years, Doug Duncan, was able to recognize his condition and seek treatment early on. When I see a friend suffer, I suffer. I am informed that Depression is a medical condition just like cancer and heart disease are medical conditions. It is time our society recognizes this situation and works to stamp out any notion of stigma attached to depression. I commend Doug for his bravery and integrity in dealing with his condition, and stand ready to assist him and his family in any way."

iFred was founded in 2004 by Kathryn Goetzke White, who started the nonprofit when she was launching a new product line, Mood-lites. She looked for a national or international nonprofit that focused on depression, but was unable to find one that she felt adequately addressed the prevention, recognition and treatment in a way that would eliminate the stigma. Many corporations she approached said it just wasn't 'sexy enough' to fund. She vowed to change that with the inception of iFred, and with the death of Phil Merrill and integrity of Doug Duncan, she is reminded of what led her in her own life experiences to be so passionate about suicide and depression.

Kathryn states "I lost my own father to suicide when I was 19 years old. He was an amazing, wonderful person with a lot of positive, passionate energy, he was a brilliant and successful businessman, and he had a strong dedication and love for family. Unfortunately, his depression was not readily noticeable, as his depression's outward appearance was anger that went on for many years prior to receiving treatment. When it got to the point that he realized something deeper was going on, and that the anger was covering up a much deeper hurt, he was too saddened by the effects of his anger that he chose to take his own life."

Kathryn goes on to say "I, too, experience depression in my life, and it is so difficult to grasp why it happens – even with my enthusiasm, intelligence and energy I can't just 'snap out of it' – and intellectually I know this but for some reason my body doesn't respond. It is a frustrating condition and one that needs significant more attention, funding, and respect. Many people commented on the appearance of Phil Merrill seeming 'out of sorts', yet people just don't feel comfortable addressing it. That simply has to change".

Tom Marquardt, executive editor of the Capital, said that Mr. Merrill's ideas about journalism boiled down to a simple philosophy: "Keep it simple, keep it understandable, and if you don't get it right the first day, get it right the next day." iFred believes the same about the stigma associated with depression. People don't understand it today, but hope with iFred's help will understand depression better tomorrow.

Depression is the leading cause of suicide and is projected to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of health impairment worldwide by the year 2020. Most people are not treated because of the lack of awareness of the condition and the stigma associated with it. The National Institute of Health recently reported that the stigma associated with depression is now worse than it was 50 years ago – a tragedy when it is treatable if people only felt comfortable seeking help.

Other local Annapolis based businesses supporting iFred include Even-Keel, Alchemy Teas, Café Guru's, Innovative Analysis, and Compass Marketing. The iFred advisory board is extensive and consists of Joe Conoscenti, Vice-President of Baltimore-based McCormick Foods, Larry McWilliams, President of Campbell International, John Blake, Director of McNeil, a Johnson & Johnson Company, Ron Elfenbein, M.D., an emergency room physician and Assistant Director of the Department of Emergency Medicine at Harbor Hospital, and several other distinguished and recognized leaders in the fields of health, psychiatry, business and more. To find out more about iFred or depression, visit [www.depression.org](http://www.depression.org).

For press contact:

[press@ifred.org](mailto:press@ifred.org)

Alisa Greenwood – 410-268-0044