The 2010 recipient of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award from Duke University is Mr. Jim Wilkerson, Department Head of Duke University Stores. This award seeks to perpetuate the excellence of character and humanitarian service of Algernon Sydney Sullivan by recognizing and honoring such qualities in others. A recipient of this award is known to his colleagues and peers as someone who exemplifies the qualities of generosity, service, integrity, and deep spirituality, as well as “nobility of character,” which the Sullivan Foundation defines as “when one goes outside the narrow circle of self-interest and begins to spend oneself for the interests of humankind.”

Through his own initiative, Jim researched, developed and drafted the nation’s first comprehensive Code of Conduct for university apparel – a set of strong labor standards that apply to all factories making Duke logoed items. At that time, many of the apparel companies that make these goods were resistant to the idea of universities establishing their own labor standards, but Jim was undeterred. It is a testament to his dedication, his diplomatic skills and his powers of persuasion that these companies have since come to recognize and respect university labor codes and their important role in protecting the rights of workers.

Jim has devoted countless hours to his labor rights work, but this is not his only
area of service; Jim also dedicates his time and leadership to serve the Durham community. Jim is a member of the Board of Crayons2Calculators, a local non-profit organization that distributes donated school supplies to local teachers, and he serves on the Cabinet of the Duke-Durham Campaign, which raises tens of thousands of dollars every year to support work in under-served Durham neighborhoods.

From his groundbreaking work on global labor rights to his dedication to local community service, Jim Wilkerson exemplifies the values of care and concern for others and effective humanitarian engagement.