

**ROBERT J. DESENA**

**FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, COUNCIL FOR UNITY, INC., NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

Bob De Sena was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. During his youth, he was involved with several street gangs – experiences that proved invaluable in his later work with at-risk teenagers. Despite these obstacles, he obtained his B. A. from St. John's University and two Master's Degrees, one from New York University and the other from Queens College.

In 1965, he became an English teacher. His skill in bringing contending ethnic and racial groups together led to the formation of the Council for Unity which he founded at John Dewey High School in 1975. The Council's customized curriculum and program ideology created by Mr. De Sena has given the program a national reputation for its success in promoting unity, safety and achievement in schools and communities.

Mr. De Sena is a man of many interests. He has acted on the stage and written over 15 plays with multi-cultural and anti-violent themes. Performed by his students, these plays showcase the Council's work and have attracted nationwide publicity. He has written the entire program curriculum, which has been accepted by the State of New York as a course for credit in high schools throughout the state. His expertise in the realm of world mythology is reflected in all Council syllabi, which insures that children experience a value system that brings meaning and structure to their lives.

Mr. De Sena serves as President of Council for Unity. Under his stewardship, the organization has grown from a community-based non-profit organization in Brooklyn to one that now spans the country and extends overseas.

Mr. De Sena has received numerous awards, including the Richard R. Green Distinguished Educator Award (date), the Gorgeous Mosaic Award conferred by the New York Urban Coalition (date), the Educator of the Year Award from the Columbian Association of the New York City Board of Education (date), the Unsung Hero Award from the Petra Foundation (date), and most recently, the President's Medal from the Freedom Foundation.

Mr. De Sena has written for School Safety Magazine and been the subject of articles in The New York Times, The Daily News, Newsday, Teacher Magazine and featured on CBS Evening News, ABC Eye Witness News, Fox 5, Good Morning America, The God Squad and Street Talk as well as numerous cable channels.