December 15, 2011

Celebration for Olympian Mel Pender

Smyrna, GA- Celebrating and honoring Atlanta native, Dr. Melvin Pender Jr. as an Olympian, entrepreneur, community leader, and military serviceman at the "Mel Pender Day" Banquet on Sunday, December 11, 2011 at 2pm (Smyrna Community Center).

Mel, at age 17, enlisted in the U.S. Army and serve for 21 years while later retiring as Captain in 1976. During his time of service, he took up athletics and became a remarkable sprinter. He was selected to the 1964 Olympic Team in Tokyo, and then 1968 in Mexico City, his 4 x 100m relay won the gold medal with a new world record of 38.24. He set several records throughout his track career up to age 35. After his athletic career, he earned a bronze star in Vietnam and worked as the head track coach at the US Military Academy at West Point.

Gamalier Sturgis and Neal Beck attended the USATFGA Hall of Fame banquet and became inspired by the work of Mel Pender and wanted to leave a legacy in his name so out of that motivation the 500 dollar scholarship was created in his name that will be awarded to a deserving you athlete that exemplifies performance on the track, stellar performance in the classroom and commitment to community

Overall, Mel's professional and life experience has inspired him to motivate our youth to achieve their goals and become successful. He has several accomplishments that were shared with his colleagues, friends, and family at the "Mel Pender Day" banquet. On behalf of the USATF GA, we would like to commend Dr. Mel Pender for his service.

Vernika Reeves, M.S.
USATF-GA 1st Vice President
Media/Communication Director
Cell: (404)783-0278
Email: vreeves@usatfga.org
Facebook: www.facebook/USATFGA