



American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity Announces 2016 Honorees for its Annual Awards

Three Congressional Icons as well as Leaders in the Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Civil Rights Fields will be honored at the Association's 42nd National Conference and Annual Meeting

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Washington, DC, April 14, 2016 - The American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity (AAAED), an organization of equal opportunity, diversity and affirmative action professionals, announced the 2016 honorees of its annual awards program. The awards will be conferred during the Association's 42nd National Conference and Annual Meeting themed "*Bridging the Opportunity Gap: Business, Education and Government.*"

The annual meeting will be held at the Sheraton Tysons Hotel, 8661 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, Virginia. The awards reception will take place on Capitol Hill, Thursday, June 9th in Room B-338 of the Rayburn House Office Building, from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm. "We are pleased to recognize these distinguished individuals and organizations for their contributions to the cause of access, equity and diversity," said Dr. Richard A. Baker, Awards Committee Chair. "Great honor is due to these trailblazers who have been outstanding in their fields," added AAAED President Rose. The awards reception is open to the press.

The list of AAAED Awards Honorees Follows:

Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Chairman G.K. Butterfield will receive the AAAED Drum Major for Justice Award. As a member of the CBC, Congressman Butterfield has focused on promoting anti-poverty programs, expanding economic development and job creation, protecting voting rights, advocating for the appointment of African Americans to judgeships and senior Administration positions, and increasing diversity in leadership positions in corporate America and in the IT industry in particular. Under his leadership the CBC has launched CBC TECH 2020 to bring together the best minds in the tech, non-profit, education and public sectors to chart a path forward to increase African American inclusion at all levels of the technology industry. The Drum Major for Justice Award is a special acknowledgement of the extraordinary contributions that an organization or individual, including a public servant or one who has held an elective office or appointment to public service, has made to the cause of equity, access and diversity.

AAAED will honor Rep. James E. Clyburn with the Arthur A. Fletcher Lifetime Achievement Award.

Before joining the House of Representatives, Mr. Clyburn was appointed by South Carolina Governor John C. West as the State's human affairs commissioner. It was during this service that Rep. Clyburn promoted affirmative action programs comparable to the ones required under Executive Order 11246. He served in this position until 1992, when he stepped down to run for Congress. Rep. Clyburn is currently Assistant Democratic Leader in the 114th Congress. He also served as Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus in 1999. He has supported higher education by leading the charge for increased Pell grants; investing millions in science and math programs and historic preservation at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Rep. Clyburn was also instrumental in advancing into law measures to resolve historic discrimination issues, significantly reducing the statutory disparity in cocaine sentencing and compensating African and Native American farmers who suffered racial discrimination under the USDA loan program. The Arthur A. Fletcher Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes a lifetime of achievement promoting and advocating for affirmative action, EEO and diversity.

AAAED will honor Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee with the Rosa Parks Award. Congresswoman Jackson Lee is currently a senior Member of the House Judiciary Committee and is the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations - the first woman to ever hold that position on the Committee. She led the fight for passage of the Fair Sentencing Act and has authored several immigration bills to set forth a comprehensive and humane solution to the immigration problem. She also introduced legislation to enhance federal enforcement of hate crimes, played a significant role in the renewal and reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, and contributed an amendment to the NASA reauthorization bill that will ensure equal access for minority and economically disadvantaged students to NASA's education programs. The Rosa Parks Award recognizes an individual who serves as a role model and leader for others through their personal achievements, excellence in a chosen field, a commitment to human, civil rights and social issues and contributions to the betterment of society.

Dr. Walter J. Leonard will receive an honorary Arthur A. Fletcher Lifetime Achievement Award, posthumously. Dr. Leonard, who passed away on December 8, 2015, is credited for being the architect of the Harvard affirmative action plan that was noted in the landmark *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* decision. According to the *New York Times*: "Even before he designed the admissions policy, Dr. Leonard was aggressively recruiting more diverse applicants to Harvard Law School. Last week, the school's bulletin, Harvard Law Today, credited him with building 'the foundation for the education of more minority and women lawyers than almost any other administrator in the United States.'" Dr. Leonard subsequently went on to serve as president of Fisk University. Dr. Leonard's family will accept the award on his behalf.

Dr. Havidán Rodríguez, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, will be the recipient of the Cesar Estrada Chavez Award. Dr. Rodriguez has had an impressive academic career, including being recognized by the State of Delaware with the Professional Achievement Award (2007). He also received the Alfredo G. de los Santos, Jr. Distinguished Leadership Award by the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (2015); was the featured cover story of the national publication, *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine* (July, 2015); and was highlighted in the *Bright Spots in Hispanic Education* by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (September 2015). Currently, he serves as the principal investigator for an NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant aimed at increasing the representation, participation, and leadership of women faculty in STEM fields. He is the co-editor (with Sáenz and Menjívar) of *Latinas/os in the United States: Changing the Face of América* (2008). The Cesar

Estrada Chavez Award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated leadership in support of workers' rights and humanitarian issues.

Northrup Grumman will receive the Roosevelt Thomas Champion of Diversity Award. Northrup Grumman is listed as one of the DiversityInc Top 50. Led by Chairman, CEO and President Wes Bush, Northrup Grumman has strong diversity-and-inclusion practices and effective employee resource groups. According to DiversityInc: "The defense contractor has been actively working on talent-development initiatives for women, Blacks, Latinos and Asians, as well as LGBT people and people with disabilities. The company also hires a significant number of veterans and has a program called Operation IMPACT to help them transition to civilian life." The Champion of Diversity Award is given to an organization or corporation for outstanding achievements in promoting diversity in the workplace.

Wright State University will receive the Edward M. Kennedy Community Service Award. Wright State is a national leader of services for students with disabilities and is noted as one of the top five disability-friendly universities in America. Wright State provides an accessible pedestrian tunnel system that connects nearly every building in the academic sector of campus. The university converts textbooks into alternate formats for students with disabilities, helps coordinate in-house personal assistance services and has a robust Ohio STEM Ability Alliance program, a one-of-a-kind service dog park and a popular service dog training program. The Edward M. Kennedy Community Service Award is presented to an individual or organization demonstrating outstanding community service.

AAAED President Marshall Rose will confer the President's Award on members of the Association who have made outstanding contributions to the Association.

For more information or to register for the Conference, go to www.AAAEDconference.org.

Founded in 1974 as the American Association for Affirmative Action (AAAA), AAAED is a national not-for-profit association of professionals working in the areas of equal opportunity, compliance and diversity. AAAED has more than 40 years of leadership in providing professional training to members, enabling them to be more successful and productive in their careers. It also promotes understanding and advocacy of affirmative action and other equal opportunity laws to enhance the tenets of access, inclusion and equality in employment, economic and educational opportunities.

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