



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR ACCESS, EQUITY AND DIVERSITY ANNOUNCES ITS 47TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

Icons of equal opportunity, affirmative action and diversity in higher education, disability rights, government and private industry are among the speakers and award recipients at the Association's 47th National Conference and Annual Awards Ceremony - Virtual on October 7 - 15, 2021

For Immediate Release: October 6, 2021

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<https://www.aaaed.org/aaaed/Conference.asp>

Washington, DC, October 6, 2021 - The American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity (AAAED), an organization of equal opportunity, diversity and affirmative action professionals, announced its 47th National Conference and Annual Award Ceremony for 2021. Themed *"Reflect, Reset and Move Towards Justice, Equity and Inclusive Excellence,"* the 47th National Conference and Annual Awards Ceremony is also acknowledging the 60th Anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order 10925, the first presidential order that specifically required that federal contractors use affirmative action in their pursuit of equal employment opportunity. "We are delighted to honor and hear such outstanding icons of social justice, diversity and equal opportunity," said Dr. Richard Anthony Baker, president of AAAED.

The eight-day conference will include presentations by agency officials including Jenny Yang, Director of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, U.S. Department of Labor; Jocelyn Samuels, Vice Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC); Suzanne Goldberg, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education; and Taryn McKenzie Williams, Assistant Secretary, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), U.S. Department of Labor.

For the first time, the conference will begin by addressing the personal and professional needs of the Equal Opportunity Professional by hosting two "Self-Care and Career Development" Days, October 7 – 8, 2021. Among issues addressed will be a discussion about *"The State of the Equal Opportunity Professional: Fighting the Fight, Challenges and Opportunities."*

On October 11 – 15, the program will take up such issues as *"Supporting Success for Working Adult Students with Learning Disabilities,"* and *"Evaluating Equity & Inclusion: Using Audits & Assessments to Understand & Strengthen Campus Climate & Racial Equity."* Program formats will range from masterclasses, "Express Talks," and "deeper dives" and there will be panels composed of regional directors from the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and the staff of the Office of Disability Employment Policy. One of the featured panels will address the issue of Critical Race Theory. This workshop will be moderated by Dr. Jamal Watson, Executive Editor of *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*.

Another panel will address the critical importance for offices for Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity to collaborate to achieve the goals of access, equity and diversity. The Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC), and the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) will join AAAED in this discussion about the “Three-Legged Stool,” institutional programs whose missions are inextricably linked.

During the Awards Ceremony on October 15th, the association will acknowledge civil rights, equal opportunity and diversity leaders. Among the honorees are: It will also honor those who have passed away in the last year. Honorees will include Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, Drum Major for Justice Award; Dr. Ricardo Fernandez, former president of Lehman College in New York, Cesar Chavez Award; Dr. Ruth J. Simmons, President of Prairie View A&M University, Rosa Parks Award; Dr. Ansley Abraham, Southern Regional Education Board, Arthur A. Fletcher Lifetime Achievement Award; Hilton, Roosevelt Thomas Champion of Diversity Award; The Frist Center for Autism and Innovation, Vanderbilt University, Edward M. Kennedy Community Service Award; Maya Valcourt, a student at Jerome High School in Dublin, Ohio, Emerging Leader Award. Dr. Freddie Groomes-McLendon and Ida “Beth” Wilson, JD, former presidents of AAAA/AAAED, will receive the association’s first Founders’ Award.

AAAED President Dr. Richard Anthony Baker will confer the President’s Award on individuals recognized for their noteworthy contributions to AAAED: Annette Butler, DBA, Georgia State University and AAAED Board Member; Margo Foreman, MPH, Iowa State University and AAAED Second Vice President; Gregory Chambers, former AAAA President; Sharron Gatling, M.A., AAAED First Vice President, Space Telescope Science Institute; Sandra Hueneman, Sr. CAAEP, Manchester Consultants, AAAED Treasurer; Nicole Johnson, MA, Spelman College; Jerry Knighton, Jr., MA, Clemson University, AAAED Conference Chair and Member of the AAAED Board; Wanda Malden, M.S.Ed., Sr. CAAP, Chair, AAAED Professional Development and Training Institute; Nicole Roberson, Texas A&M University, Dr. Nicole A. Roberson, Sr. CAAP, Texas A&M University; Marilyn Schuyler, Esq., Seyfarth Shaw, AAAED Conference Committee and Board Member; Tonisha Davis, CP, MBA, CAAP University of Arkansas, AAAED Conference Program Committee; Beth Valentine, Ph.D., University of North Dakota; Shirley Wilcher, MA, JD, CAAP, AAAED Executive Director. All of the President’s Award Honorees are members of the AAAED 47th National Conference Committee.

The AAAED 47th National Conference and Awards Ceremony is open to the press. For more information or to register for the Conference, go to: https://www.aaed.org/aaed/Conference_Agenda1.asp.

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 47 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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