



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: JONATHAN ZUR 804-515-7950
JZUR@INCLUSIVEVA.ORG

VCIC Announces Recipients of 55th Annual Richmond Humanitarian Awards

*2017 Richmond Humanitarian Awards Dinner Presented by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities
October 23, 2017 – Hilton Hotel & Spa/Short Pump.*

(Richmond, VA) - The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (VCIC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 55th annual Richmond Humanitarian Awards. The awards honor individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the promotion of respect and understanding among people of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds in the Richmond area. Presented by the Richmond Chapter of VCIC, the 2017 Humanitarian Awards dinner will be held on Monday, October 23, 2017, at the Hilton Hotel & Spa in Short Pump.

The 2017 Richmond Humanitarian Awards Recipients

Susan W. Adolf

Susan Weiner Adolf is a long-time Richmond leader, volunteer, and advocate for children and the Jewish community. As part owner of her family's business, Saxon Shoes, she supported special projects like Shoes for the Needy and Bright Beginnings. Susan exemplifies the value of "paying it forward" through her involvement with projects like the Student Division of the Jewish Federation Campaign, where she teaches Jewish youth the importance of giving, or Tzedakah. She and her husband also work to support the LGBTQ community by holding meetings and programs at Adolf Jewelers. Susan is excited to be involved with Dancing Classrooms of Richmond, an organization teaching children social awareness and self-esteem through dance.

Brian K. Blount

Brian K. Blount is President and Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA and Charlotte, NC. As a teacher, lecturer, theologian, and leader, Brian is a passionate and tireless advocate for interfaith dialogue and inclusion across many areas of difference. A graduate of Princeton Seminary, he is a leading national scholar of theology, cultural studies, and hermeneutics, the award-winning author of six books, and the co-editor of *Making Room at the Table: An Invitation to Multicultural Worship*. He is currently the President-Elect of both the Society of Biblical Literature and the Association of Theological Schools.

William A. Harrison, Jr.

Bill Harrison has served as the President and Executive Director of Diversity Richmond since 2012. He brings years of nonprofit leadership and service in the spirit of inclusion, having served with the Fan Free Clinic during the height of the HIV epidemic. He was also the first public information officer with the Virginia Department of Health's Bureau of STD/AIDS. Before joining Diversity Richmond, he was the Government and Public Affairs Director with the American Red Cross, Greater Richmond Chapter for 17 years. Bill co-chaired Richmond's first pride festival in 1978, also serving with a number of LGBT organizations such as Dignity-Integrity, the Episcopal Diocese Commission on Human Sexuality Communities and the Richmond Gay Pride Coalition.

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Gail L. Letts

Gail Letts is Virginia Market President for First Tennessee Bank. With over thirty years of leadership and strategic planning experience in financial management, she was previously with C&F Bank and SunTrust Banks. Gail currently serves as Chair of the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority, is Secretary of the Board for the Virginia BioTechnology Research Park, and served as Chair for the American Heart Association's 2017 "Go Red for Women" campaign. She also serves on the Boards of the VCU School of Business Foundation, the First Tee of Chesterfield/Richmond, the Chesterfield Cultural Arts Foundation, and the Richmond World Affairs Council.

E. Ayn Welleford

As Associate Professor and Chair of VCU's Department of Gerontology, Ayn Welleford currently works to #DisruptAgeism while "Promoting Optimal Aging for Individuals and Communities" through her teaching, scholarship, and community engagement. Dr. Welleford has been honored by the Alzheimer's Association and has also received the Mary C. Payne Leadership in Aging Award. Dr. Welleford is former Chair of the Governor's Commonwealth of Virginia Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Commission, as well as a recipient of the AGHE Distinguished Teacher Award. Dr. Welleford currently serves as a co-lead of the Greater Richmond AgeWave Collaborative, which is responsible for making our region a great place for all people to age.

ART 180

ART 180's mission is to give young people in challenging circumstances the chance to express themselves through art, and to share their stories with others. Founded in 1998, the organization engages Richmond's most vulnerable youth by using art as a means for positive youth development, building resiliency and linking individual growth with the emergence of social responsibility. They then invite the community to engage through their public exhibitions, showcases and events. ART 180 builds inclusive community by bringing people together who might not normally intersect, and it encouraging them to communicate – through their art, and through conversation.

Fifty-five years ago, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities - then called the National Conference of Christians and Jews - began a tradition in Richmond, "to honor the work of our friends, neighbors, and family members who gave to others the same rights, respect and dignity that they sought for themselves." Today, VCIC works with hundreds of schools, businesses, and communities each year to help them achieve success through inclusion. The 82-year-old organization delivers programs to educators and students in the region through the Connections Institute, Prejudice Awareness Summit, Diversity Dialogue Days, and Educational Equity Initiatives. VCIC also provides professional development for local businesses and nonprofit organizations. In the last year, VCIC trained over 22,000 people across Virginia.

The 2017 VCIC Humanitarian Awards Dinner is sponsored by several organizations and individuals. Humanitarian-level sponsors include Bon Secours, Genworth and Wells Fargo.

For more information about the organization or about reservations for the Awards Dinner on October 23, 2017, go to www.inclusiveVA.org.

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