

Local humanitarian efforts recognized

By Dan Cawley
Special to Compass

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2016 Humanitarian Awards. This 52nd presentation of the awards by the Tidewater Chapter of the center were April 7 at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott.

Individuals and organizations were honored for making significant humanitarian contributions to the South Hampton Roads community.

The following received Tidewater Humanitarian Awards:

Charles G. Barker of Charles Barker Holdings Inc., operating automotive dealerships, a real estate company and a private jet company. His foundation, Charles Barker Champions for Kids, has forged a working collaboration with local charitable and educational organizations to serve disadvantaged youth. Funds provide counseling, drug and alcohol awareness and community mentorship programs, including a scholarship program for every high school in Virginia Beach.

Cynthia A. Cutler, a real estate lending professional, has earned a reputation as a tireless advocate for marginalized members of society. While advocating at the local and state level for the rights of the LGBT community, she introduced the highly successful Dining Out for Life program and helped bring Hampton Roads Pride events to Town Point Park. She was a founding member of HRBOR, Hampton Roads Business OutReach, that recognizes contributions of the LGBT business community to the economic health of the community.

B. Courtney McBath and his wife now welcome thousands of worshipers each week to Cavalry Revival Church on Poplar Hall Drive. His ministry's service to the community in-

cludes a food and clothing pantry, mentoring program and nursing home ministries. He is presiding bishop of Calvary Alliance of Churches and Ministries, providing guidance, leadership training, and opportunities for accountability to affiliated ministries around the world.

Alvin A. Wall is a founding shareholder of the Wall, Einhorn & Chernitzer accounting firm and has practiced in the area of taxation for more than 40 years. He serves on the boards of numerous organizations, including the United Way of South Hampton Roads and Westminster Canterbury Chesapeake Bay. His company makes supporting charity part of its business model and serves as a role model for employees encouraged to serve the community.

The Tidewater Jeffrey B. Spence Award for Interfaith Understanding went to Voices of Faith, an important re-

source for the community to foster interfaith understanding for more than 30 years. Voices of Faith began as a television program in 1982 as "Focus on Faith." In 2012, the name of the series was changed to "Voices of Faith," and the interfaith dialogue is now being presented monthly as a podcast on the website of the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom at Virginia Wesleyan College, with Jim Bergdoll continuing as moderator and coordinator.

The 2016 Tidewater Distinguished Merit Award was presented to The Institute for the Humanities at Old Dominion University for the "Birth of An Answer" program that celebrated 100 years of African American creative and critical responses to "The Birth of a Nation" movie in 1915. The program featured a screening of Within Our Gates (1919), a moderated conversation with a panel of

prominent black filmmakers, a musical performance, and a screening of the ODU-produced short fiction film "Our Nation," which tells the story of the Norfolk response to "Birth of a Nation" through the eyes of Douglas, a young African American.

The Humanitarian Awards are presented annually in communities across the state. Begun in Tidewater in 1965, when the organization was part of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the awards honor individuals and organizations who have demonstrated a commitment to the promotion of respect and understanding among people of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

For more information about the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities go to www.inclusiveva.org.

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Winners of the Tidewater Humanitarian Awards, from left: Alvin Wall, James Bergdoll (Voices of Faith), Cynthia Cutler, Bishop. B. Courtney McBath, and Avi Santo (The Institute for the Humanities at Old Dominion University).