



NEWS RELEASE

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VCIC ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF 49TH ANNUAL LYNCHBURG HUMANITARIAN AWARDS

*2016 Lynchburg Humanitarian Awards Dinner presented by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities
May 25, 2016 at Lynchburg College*

(Lynchburg, VA) - The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2016 Humanitarian Awards. This 49th presentation of the awards by the Lynchburg Chapter of VCIC will be held on Wednesday, May 25, 2016, at Lynchburg College. The awards celebration honors individuals and organizations for making significant humanitarian contributions to the greater Lynchburg community.

The 2016 VCIC Lynchburg Award Recipients

Libby M. Fitzgerald moved to Lynchburg in 1971 and began working at WSET-TV for almost 20 years. She then worked for WVTF Public Radio in Roanoke as the Lynchburg correspondent for about 15 years. Libby has served on the Board of Directors of several area non-profits: Lynchburg Fine Arts Center, Academy Center of the Arts, Endstation Theatre, YMCA of Central Virginia, James River Arts Council, and Black Theatre Ensemble, among others. She is founder of "Keys for the Hill City," a public art program that secures donated pianos, enlists students to paint them, and places them throughout downtown Lynchburg from May to October for the enjoyment of all citizens.

John E. Keith spent over 25 years at J.Crew in Lynchburg as Director of Human Resources. After retirement, he was employed at Gleaning For The World, and he is now the Executive Director at Parkview Community Mission. John has been active in the community through numerous organizations, including Junior Achievement, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, United Way, and Lynchburg Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Meals on Wheel of Greater Lynchburg. With his wife, Maryann, John organized the "Back Packs for Kids' Sake" program, which served 650 children each week, in addition to numerous other projects that they both work on to support the community.

Ora S. McCoy is the retired Postmaster of Appomattox. She served on the Appomattox County School Board for 8 years and has supported numerous nonprofit boards, including Carver-Price Alumni Association, American Cancer Society, Appomattox Community Center, Appomattox County 4-H, and Habitat for Humanity, among others. She also served as Co-Chair of the Carver-Price Legacy Museum Sesquicentennial Committee, which was responsible for the "Footsteps to Freedom" program honoring Hannah Reynolds, an enslaved woman in Appomattox. Ora served as Co-Chair on many Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration events in Appomattox.

J. Marie Waller is a retired educator with 43 years in the History Department at E.C. Glass High School in Lynchburg City Schools. Her involvement in the community includes The League of Women Voters, the Dialogue on Race and Racism, the Youth Philanthropy Award Board, and the Fort Early Neighborhood Watch. She also supports the Jones Memorial Library, Friends of the E.C. Glass Art Collection, and Historic Sandusky. Serving on the Lynchburg City School Board and the Lynchburg Museum Board allowed Marie to champion efforts to provide all city elementary school students the experience of a field trip to the city museum.

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In addition, VCIC will present two special awards this year:

Nathan C. Brooks, II will receive the **Jeffrey B. Spence Award for Interfaith Understanding**, presented to individuals or organizations for particular distinction in working across religious lines. Rev. Brooks served as Minister of Peakland Baptist Church in Lynchburg for 33 years, and he was Co-Founder and Executive Director of Pastoral Counseling Services of Central Virginia for 44 years before merging with Presbyterian Homes and Family Services, Inc. (now HumanKind), where he currently is the Coordinator of Pastoral Counseling Services. Nathan has served on numerous boards, including The Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship, The Holocaust Educational Foundation of Central Virginia, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Lynchburg Community Council, Interfaith Outreach Association (which he helped to establish), The Lynchburg Area Mental Health Association, Family Services of Central Virginia later identified as Family Alliance, and The Miller Home for Girls.

Elliot S. & Rosel H. Schewel are receiving the **Distinguished Virginian Award**, an award that is given on the rarest of occasions to a Virginian whose humanitarian works have had a positive effect across the Commonwealth and even beyond. Elliot graduated from Washington and Lee University, worked at Schewel Furniture, and helped start Jefferson National Bank. He was elected to City Council for one term in the 1960's and later was elected to the Virginia Senate, where he served for 20 years. Since retiring from the Senate in 1996, Elliot has served on the Centra Health Foundation Board, Greater Lynchburg Community Trust Board, Randolph Macon College Board of Trustees, Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship Board and the Westminster Canterbury Foundation Board. Rosel taught in Lynchburg City Schools and spent 20 years as a professor at Lynchburg College. State boards that she served on for ten years each are The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Virginia Foundation of Humanities. Currently, Rosel is involved with the Beacon of Hope project that grew out of Lynchburg's Dialogue on Race and Racism initiative. In addition to being on the Board of Beacon of Hope, Rosel serves on the Boards of MAAM, Amazement Square Children's Museum, the Holocaust Foundation, Lynchburg College, and she participates in several other organizations.

The Humanitarian Awards are presented annually in communities across the state by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. Begun in 1967 in Lynchburg, when the organization was part of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Humanitarian 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 81 years, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has been addressing prejudices in all forms in order to improve academic achievement, increase workplace productivity, and enhance local trust. Through workshops, retreats, and customized programs, VCIC works with schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success through inclusion.

The 2016 VCIC Humanitarian Awards Dinner is chaired by Marjette G. Upshur, Director, City of Lynchburg Office of Economic Development.

For more information about the organization or the Awards Dinner, visit www.inclusiveva.org.

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