



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 1, 2019

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

VCIC Announces Recipients of 55th Annual Tidewater Humanitarian Awards

2019 Tidewater Humanitarian Awards Dinner is presented by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities March 28, 2019 – The Westin Virginia Beach Town Center.

(Norfolk, VA) - The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (VCIC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 55th annual Tidewater 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 South Hampton Roads community. The 2019 awards will be presented by the Tidewater Chapter of VCIC at their annual dinner on Thursday, March 28, 2019, at The Westin Virginia Beach Town Center.

The 2019 Tidewater Humanitarian Awards Recipients

Regina R. Darden – Regina Darden is the founder of H.O.P.E. (Helping Others Pursue Excellence) Foundation, the first and only summer homeless shelter in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Born in Norfolk, Virginia, she received her Business Administration Degree from Tidewater Community College. Regina worked as a Longshoreman for nearly 20 years, thinking that her transition for retirement would be opening a restaurant. Instead, in 2017, H.O.P.E. was able to serve over 600 homeless guests and provide them with home cooked meals and safe shelter from May 15 through November 23. In 2018, H.O.P.E. grew, and had over 140 volunteers to help their guests, and Regina is looking forward to its 2019 opening.

Claus Ihlemann – Claus Ihlemann is founder and president of Decorum Furniture. A native of Denmark, he has called Virginia home since 1975. Claus and his husband Robert Roman are also engaged in the management and redevelopment of The Palace Shops & Station. The couple stays involved in many community organizations such as Hope House Foundation, Stockley Gardens Arts Festival, LGBT Life Center, TR Dance, The Governor's School for the Arts, Tidewater Artist Outreach, Equality Virginia, and Hampton Roads Pride just to mention a few. Claus currently serves on the Board of The Ghent Business Association, is a member of the Ghent Taskforce, and a Trustee of the Chrysler Museum of Art. Past Board positions includes Norfolk's Design Review Committee, Tidewater AIDS Taskforce, Norfolk Convention and Visitors Bureau, and The Virginia Ballet Theatre.

Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander – Cassandra Newby-Alexander is the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Professor of History, and Director of the Joseph Jenkins Roberts Center for African Diaspora Studies at Norfolk State University. She has published numerous books and articles in her field of study, and is an award-winning author. Dr. Newby-Alexander currently serves on the boards of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, the Virginia Law Foundation, the 2019 Commemoration Commission, Historical Commission of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Norfolk Sister City Association, and WHRO. She has consulted for numerous agencies and initiatives, including the American Civil War Museum, the Hampton History Museum, Jamestown Settlement Museum, Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial Commission, the Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program, the Virginia Historical Society, and Virginia Humanities.

(continued on pg. 2)

- Kevin H. Turpin** – Kevin Turpin is an Associate Pastor of New Life Church and Executive Director of the Life Enrichment Center, which he founded in 2003 to expand the church's impact on the local community and serve children who may lack the family support he experienced. Nearly 250 tutors served at Life Enrichment Center during the 2017-18 academic year, and more than 300 tutors will serve in 25 school sites throughout the Hampton Roads and Richmond areas during the 2018-19 academic year. Besides his ministry with New Life and work with the Center, Kevin has taught as adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychology at Tidewater Community College since 2004. He also is Founder and President of the Institute for Personal and Professional Development, which he launched in 2014 to address training needs of individuals and groups.
- Alok K. Verma** – Dr. Alok K. Verma is Ray Ferrari Professor in the Engineering Technology Department at Old Dominion University. Dr. Verma is a licensed professional engineer in the state of Virginia, a certified manufacturing engineer and has certifications in Lean Manufacturing and Six Sigma. He has organized several international conferences as General Chair, and also serves as Associate Editor for three international journals. Dr. Verma's scholarly publications include more than 87 journal articles and papers in conference proceedings and over 50 technical reports. He has served the Hampton Roads community as board member of several non-profit organizations including Norfolk Sister City Association, World Affairs Council, and Asian Indians of Hampton Roads. He served three terms as President of Asian Indians of Hampton Roads and continues to serve as Chair of Public Relations.
- Patricia P. Wainger** – Patti Wainger is a full time community volunteer in her retirement. She was founding director of Academy Arts, a summer enrichment program at Norfolk Academy. In 1992, she became the founding director of Norfolk Academy's Learning Bridge, a satellite of the national consortium, Summerbridge. Currently, Patti spends several days a weeks at the Park Place School, a tuition-free school for students whose families live at the poverty level, where she provides enrichment opportunities for many of the students. Additionally, Patti reads to the blind on WHRO's Voice radio, is active at Beth El Synagogue, and serves as secretary of Jewish Family Service. For the past several years, she has chaired health awareness projects for Jewish Family Service, EVMS, LifenetHealth, the Chrysler Museum, and WHRO.

Fifty-five years ago, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities - then called the National Conference of Christians and Jews - began a tradition in South Hampton Roads, "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 schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success through inclusion. The 84-year-old organization delivers programs to high school students in the region through the Connections Institute and Diversity Dialogue Day. VCIC also provides professional development for many local educators, businesses, and nonprofit organizations, leveraging diversity and inclusion to achieve success.

Alvin A. Wall (Wall Einhorn & Chernitzer P.C.) is chairing the 2019 VCIC Tidewater Humanitarian Awards dinner. For more information about the organization or about reservations for the Awards on March 28th, go to www.inclusiveVA.org.

###