



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FEBRUARY 14, 2020

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

### VCIC Announces Recipients of 56th Annual Tidewater Humanitarian Awards

*2020 Tidewater Humanitarian Awards Dinner is presented by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities  
March 25, 2020 – The Westin Virginia Beach Town Center.*

(Virginia Beach, VA) - The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (VCIC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 56<sup>th</sup> 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 2020 awards will be presented by the Tidewater Chapter of VCIC at their annual dinner on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, at The Westin Virginia Beach Town Center.

#### The 2020 Tidewater Humanitarian Awards Recipients

**Sharon S. Goodwyn** – Sharon Goodwyn is Counsel with Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP. She has been included in The Best Lawyers in America for the past 12 years and was recognized for five of those years as a Norfolk “Lawyer of the Year” in several practice areas. Active in the community, Sharon currently serves as the Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation and on the Boards of Eastern Virginia Medical School, St. Mary’s Home (immediate past president), the University of Virginia Law School Foundation, Virginia Wesleyan University, and the University of Virginia Tidewater Jefferson Scholars Selection Committee. She is also a past President and member of the Board for the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore.

**Jay M. Klebanoff** – Jay Klebanoff currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of Hercules Fence Company, an organization he has been with for thirty years. He began his volunteerism in Washington, DC, serving first as a Big Brother for Big Brothers of the Capitol Area and then with the organization Washington Area Youth At Risk. As a community volunteer, Jay has served on the board and as President and Treasurer of Jewish Family Service of Tidewater, on the board of the Virginia Zoological Society, on the board and as President of United Jewish Federation of Tidewater, and on the board and Vice Chairman of An Achievable Dream in Virginia Beach. Jay has always felt that it is important to give back as he honors the Jewish tradition of Tikkun Olam – making the world a better place.

**Toiya A. Sosa** – Toiya Sosa currently serves as Regional Public Affairs Coordinator for GEICO. In this role as a corporate social responsibility professional, she oversees the philanthropic and community outreach programs, interfaces with local government officials and media, and manages the employee volunteer program for over 3,300 employees. Toiya was recently recognized on the Inside Business Power List. She serves on the board of directors for Women United and Urban League of Hampton Roads, and on the Executive Advisory Committee for UNCF. Toiya earned a bachelor’s in Mass Communications from Norfolk State University, a master’s in Business Administration from Strayer University, and a Master’s in Law Degree from Regent University.

*(continued on pg. 2)*

**James M. Wood, Jr.** – Jim Wood has been First Presbyterian's Senior Pastor since 1999. He has worked with the Urban Renewal Center, Norfolk Police Clergy Patrol, the interfaith group Hands United Building Bridges (HUBB), and many other faith and civic leaders in programs both spiritual and societal. In 2003, he co-founded Tree of Lives, a non-profit group that works cooperatively with Nazareth Mission Hospital near Nairobi, Kenya, supporting 5,000+ HIV/AIDS patients with food and nutrition counseling, medical and educational funding, and programming. The organization also operates an orphanage. Jim leads pilgrimages to Kenya three times a year. He has also previously led mission teams in Russia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Sudan.

#### **JEFFREY B. SPENCE AWARD FOR INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING**

**Amy K. Milligan** – Dr. Amy K. Milligan is the Batten Endowed Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies and Women's Studies at Old Dominion University, where she is also the director of the Institute for Jewish Studies and Interfaith Understanding. She is an ethnographer who is especially interested in the experiences of small or marginalized communities. Presently, Amy is working to tell the story of four Jews in Selma, AL who are keeping their synagogue alive. At ODU, she has worked to bring together religious groups across campus and in the local community. Amy is an active member at Norfolk's Reform Synagogue, Temple Ohef Sholom. Additionally, she is passionate about animal rescue and is the founder of Cookies for Clara, raising awareness and support for senior dog rescue and hospice.

#### **DISTINGUISHED MERIT AWARD**

**Association of American Physicians of Indian Origin Hampton Roads** – AAPI-HR has been in existence as an informal body for over 20 years, and in 2009, become a formal non-profit organization. Immediately, members worked together to raise funds with the goal to give back to the community they had adopted. Currently AAPI-HR has more than 150 members. When AAPI-HR was formed, its main goal was to provide medical care to those in need in Hampton Roads. Since making that commitment ten years ago, AAPI-HR has provided more than \$1 million to the community that has in turn benefited area free clinics, scholarships for medical, physician assistant and nurse practitioner students, as well as an annual Free Health Camp for the community.

Fifty-six 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 85-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. In 2019, VCIC opened a Hampton Roads office on the campus of Virginia Wesleyan University.

Dennis G. Manning (Norfolk Academy) is chairing the 2020 VCIC Tidewater Humanitarian Awards dinner. For more information about the organization or about reservations for the Awards on March 25<sup>th</sup>, go to [www.inclusiveVA.org](http://www.inclusiveVA.org).

# # #