



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 19, 2022

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VCIC Announces Recipients of 60th Annual Richmond Humanitarian Awards

2022 Richmond Humanitarian Awards Dinner will be presented in person and virtually on October 25, 2022 by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities.

(Richmond, VA) - The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2022 Richmond Humanitarian Awards. This 60th presentation of the awards by VCIC's Richmond Chapter will be held Tuesday, October 25, 2022, at Hilton Hotel & Spa in Short Pump, with a virtual option. The awards celebration honors individuals and organizations for making significant humanitarian contributions to the Richmond community.

The 2022 Richmond Humanitarian Awards Recipients

Dr. **Makola M. Abdullah** is the President of Virginia State University. Under his leadership and guidance, VSU experienced the single largest year-to-year increase in enrollment in more than a decade and the highest retention rate in more than twenty years. Some of the major initiatives that President Abdullah has launched include the establishment of the John Mercer Langston Institute for African American Political Leadership to assess, develop, and empower African American leaders; the establishment of The Center for Policing Leadership and Social Justice to address the critical divide between law enforcement and communities of color; and the establishment of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging on campus to promote good relations toward and support those who may be subject to discrimination. In the community, he serves on the Boards of the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, and Richmond Forum.

Hamilton Glass is a nationally recognized artist. He is also the founder of Mending Walls, a project launched in 2020 that unites artists from different backgrounds and asks them to look at their differences and commonalities. Through their conversations, they create pieces that speak about themes that came out of their conversations, particularly against the background of the uprisings. This work continues and has taken on many forms, including inspiring educators who are interested in using the process to create their projects and curriculum. Hamilton has extensive involvement in the community through partnering with other organizations, serving on boards, and creating community-based projects. He currently serves on the boards of The Street Art Festival and 1708 Gallery, and he has previously worked with HandsOn Greater Richmond as an art facilitator and ART 180 leading art-based programs with Richmond Public School students exploring art and expression.

Devon M. Henry is the CEO & President of Team Henry Enterprises, LLC, a nationally recognized contracting enterprise based in Richmond, VA. He has become the premier "go-to" professional for the removal and relocation of massive 19th-century bronze sculptures. His company was hired to remove over 23 Confederate statues across the Southeastern U.S. Devon is a sought-after board member in both the not-for-profit and corporate sectors, serving on several boards and committees including the Board of Directors for Village Bank and Trust Financial Corp, Norfolk State University, where is he currently Rector (Governatorial appointee), Bon Secours Mercy Health Foundation (Vice Chairman), Venture Richmond, Virginia March of Dimes (Past Chairman), Metropolitan Business League (Past Chairman), and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc (26th Eastern Regional Director). Utilizing his expertise to help repurpose history, Devon founded CryptoFederacy.com in 2022 – a community rooted in creating NFT artwork and NFT Moments that give back to the underserved communities most impacted by Confederate ideology.

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Laura D. Lafayette serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Richmond Association of REALTORS® and the Central Virginia Regional Multiple Listing Service. In 2004, she founded the Association's nonprofit, the Partnership for Housing Affordability (PHA). Because she believes stable, affordable housing is foundational for all other positive outcomes, such as health, education, and vocation, Laura has worked to create more affordable housing units as well as a public policy environment that supports affordable housing development. She is the past Chair of the Board of Richmond Metropolitan Habitat for Humanity, the Better Housing Coalition, HOMEWARD, and Housing Forward Virginia. In 2015, she helped found the Maggie Walker Community Land Trust and served as Chair of the Board through 2020. MWCLT is committed to the creation of permanently affordable homeownership opportunities and closing the racial wealth gap through home ownership.

Julie E. McConnell is a Professor of Law, Legal Practice at the University of Richmond. She also serves as the Director of the university's Children's Defense Clinic, where she and her students represent indigent children charged with delinquency or truancy offenses, or who are seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. Since 2011, the clinic has successfully gained early release for more than 20 youth at resentencing hearings across Virginia, successfully avoided felony convictions for all of their juvenile trial clients, and successfully litigated dozens of Special Immigrant Juvenile Status cases for Central American children, all pro bono. The clinic currently serves as pro bono counsel with a specialized Richmond Public Schools/Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court monthly docket known as the "Parents + Attendance=School Success" (PASS) docket for Richmond parents struggling to consistently send their children to school. A restorative justice approach was so successful in one of their cases that it helped spark the regular use of restorative justice to resolve cases in a local court.

Halina Zinn is a Holocaust survivor who tirelessly educates hundreds of students, teachers, and residents of Richmond and beyond about the Nazi perpetrated Holocaust against the Jews during World War II. Halina speaks to schools, universities, religious groups, and people of all backgrounds about what happens when hate goes unchecked. She also speaks on a regular basis to the Alexander Lebenstein Holocaust Education Institute at the Virginia Holocaust Museum. More recently, Halina will tell her story as the featured speaker in the new Holographic Theater being created at the Virginia Holocaust Museum. The Museum is working with the Dimensions in Testimony Program of the USC Shoah Foundation to create the Pepper's Ghost display or the Hologram of Halina. Once completed, Halina and her story will be at the Museum in perpetuity.

Sixty 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 schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success through inclusion. The 87-year-old organization delivers programs to educators and students in the region through the Connections Institute, Prejudice Awareness Summit, Diversity Dialogue Day, and the Educational Equity Initiative. VCIC also provides professional development for many local businesses and nonprofit organizations, leveraging diversity and inclusion to achieve success. In the last year, VCIC delivered over 1,000 programs and trained more than 25,000 people across Virginia.

The 2022 VCIC Humanitarian Awards Dinner is sponsored by several organizations and individuals. Bon Secours is the Humanitarian sponsor of the event.

For more information about the organization or to make reservations for the Awards Dinner or virtual event on October 25, go to www.inclusiveVA.org.