2026 RED JACKET AWARDS

HONORING

Alphonso O'Neil-White &
Marcia O'Neil-White
The Red Jacket Award

Shane E. Stephenson
The Owen B. Augspurger Award

Our Lady of Victory
National Shrine & Basilica
The Daniel B. Niederlander Award

Proudly Presented by
The Buffalo History Museum
Board of Managers

EVENT TIMELINE

5:30 PM | Cocktail Reception

State Court | Library | Mezzanine | Portico
The evening begins with passed hors d'oeuvres and drinks throughout the reception spaces.

Explore the Library
View collection items highlighting the lives and work of tonight's honorees.

Bars are available on BOTH floors.
Additional seating and a bar are available on the Second Floor Mezzanine.

6:00 PM | Dinner

State Court | Second Floor Mezzanine | Portico
Dinner, seating, and bars are available on both the first and second floors.

Looking for additional seating or a shorter bar line?
Head upstairs to the Second Floor Mezzanine, where food, seating, and a full bar are available.

Additional seating is also available outside on the Portico.

7:00 PM | Honoree Presentation

Auditorium
Join us in the Auditorium to celebrate this year's award winners.

8:00 PM | Coffee & Dessert

State Court
Join us in the State Court for coffee, dessert, and continued celebration.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

One Museum Court, Buffalo, NY
14216 | 716.873.9644

buffalohistory.org

All information as on 10/12/26

Congratulations
to the awardees of

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

Alphonso O'Neil-White &
Marcia O'Neil-White
RED JACKET AWARDEE

Shane E. Stephenson
OWEN B. AUGSPURGER AWARDEE

AND OUR BELOVED BEACON IN WNY
OLV National Shrine & Basilica
DANIEL B. NIEDERLANDER AWARDEE

KAREN AND RICHARD PENFOLD

RUN OF SHOW

Welcome:

Melissa Leonard, Board President

The Daniel B. Niederlander Award

OLV & Basilica National Shrine

Presented by: Alexander Schimert, Board Vice President & Event Chair

Nominated by: Eileen Hudson Wolmering

The Owen B. Augspurger Award

Shane E. Stephenson

Presented by: Sara Augspurger

Nominated by: Laura L. Fitzgerald

The Red Jacket Award

Alphonso & Marcia O'Neil-White

Presented by: John J. Walsh III

Nominated by: John J. Walsh III

Mission Moment:

Ted Walsh, Walsh Insurance

Closing Remarks:

Melissa N. Brown, Executive Director



ALPHONSO AND MARCIA

Congratulations for a lifetime of matchless, sacrificial, wise and uplifting service to our community's young people!

Respectfully,
Jack Walsh

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Welcome to one of our Museum's most meaningful traditions. Since 1957, the Red Jacket Award has honored those whose steadfast dedication strengthens the fabric of Western New York — preserving our past, shaping our present, and inspiring generations to come.

Tonight, we celebrate four remarkable recipients who embody that spirit in very different ways.

Our Lady of Victory National Shrine & Basilica receives the Daniel B. Niederlander Award for outstanding programming and service to the community. Its Centennial Celebration brought together historic restoration, exhibitions, concerts, educational programs, and community events to honor the Basilica's remarkable history and ensure its continued vitality.

Shane E. Stephenson receives the Owen B. Augspurger Award for outstanding service to local history. Shane has dedicated his career to preserving and sharing the stories of our region. Through collections work, publications, presentations, and community partnerships, he continues to make history accessible to audiences throughout Western New York and beyond.

Alphonso O'Neil-White and Marcia O'Neil-White receive the Red Jacket Award in recognition of their quiet, continued devotion to the civic progress of our community. Through their leadership of initiatives they have helped create greater educational opportunity and strengthen the community they proudly call home.

As we honor this year's recipients, we also reflect on the many Red Jacket Award recipients who came before them. Their stories remind us that a stronger community is built by those who preserve its history, serve its people, and invest in its future.

The Buffalo History Museum is proud to be part of that work. Every day, we preserve the stories that help our community understand where it came from and imagine where it can go. Together, we can ensure that Buffalo's stories are not only remembered, but preserved, shared, and built upon for generations to come.

Melissa N. Brown
Executive Director

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The replica of the Red Jacket Medal is displayed at this evening's Red Jacket Awards through the generous philanthropic support of **Bill and Maureen O'Donnell.** We honor their enduring commitment to preserving history and celebrating community leadership.

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Say Yes Buffalo

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2026 RED JACKET AWARDS AND EVENT COMMITTEE

Alexander Schimert
Event Committee Chair

Diana Augspurger

Sara Augspurger

Scott Bieler

Mike Conroy

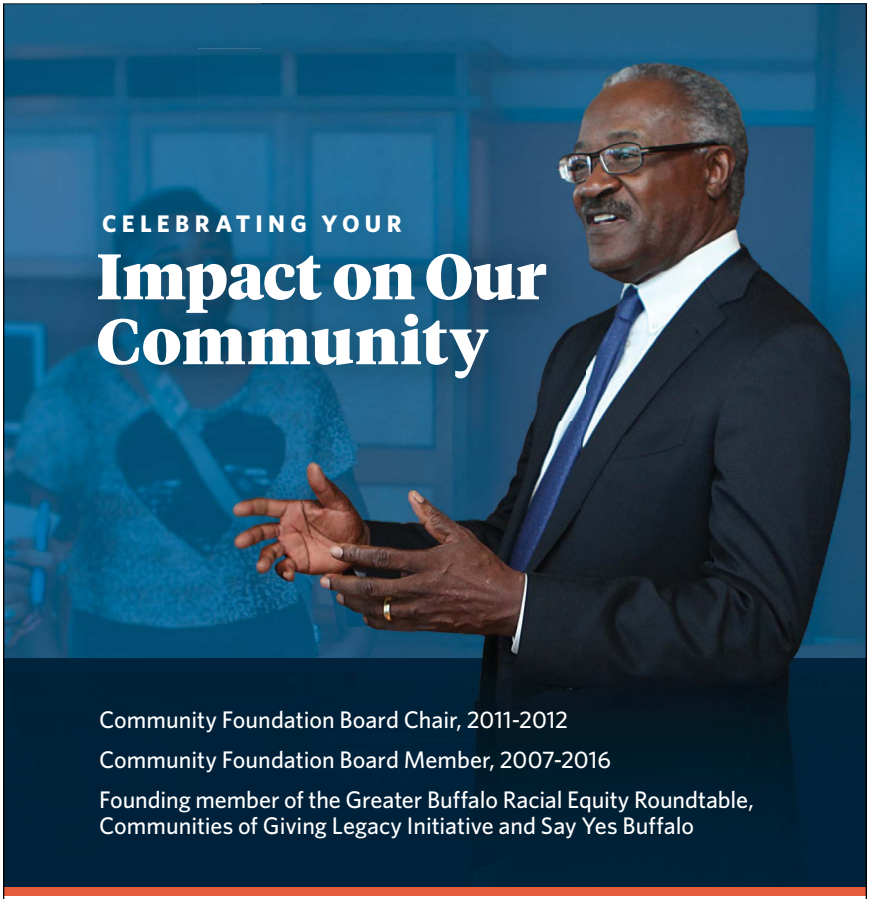
Jane Gilbride

Melissa Leonard

THE AWARDS SELECTION PROCESS:

Each year, The Buffalo History Museum recognizes local leaders and organizations for their contributions to our community. The Museum collaborates with the Buffalo community by opening the nominations for the Red Jacket, Daniel B. Niederlander, and Owen B. Augspurger Awards to the general public.

An Awards Committee comprised of current and past members of our Board of Managers, community members, and previous award recipients review all nominations and select candidates for each award. The selected candidates are then presented to The Buffalo History Museum's Board of Managers for approval.



Congratulations to Marcia and Alphonso O'Neil-White on receiving the 2026 Red Jacket Award. Your enduring commitment to creating a more vibrant and equitable Greater Buffalo has made a lasting impact on our community and continues to help shape a stronger future for all.

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Community Foundation
for Greater Buffalo

THE DANIEL B. NIEDERLANDER AWARD

Honoring

OLV & Basilica National Shrine



Our Lady of Victory (OLV) National Shrine & Basilica in Lackawanna, New York, was designated a Basilica by Pope Pius XI in 1926, the second in the United States. Today it is a national treasure and international destination, welcoming nearly 250,000 visitors each year from 46 states and 15 countries. Guests come to pray, to take in the beauty of the Basilica, and to visit the tomb of founder Venerable Nelson Baker, a candidate for canonization. The Father Baker Museum on the lower level tells the story of his life and legacy.

Guided by its tagline, "All Are Welcome," OLV serves its community through year-round programming, including commemorative masses, sacred concerts, art exhibits, and historical displays. The OLV parish includes 1,800 registered households and an active Religious Education Program. Its elementary school has educated students from Pre-K through 8th grade for more than 120 years.

OLV also works to bring new audiences into its mission. Father Baker on Tap, hosted periodically by OLV Charities, is a free networking and educational series that introduces young professionals and community members to Father Baker's legacy and the ongoing work of OLV institutions. Held at the Basilica, often in the Father Baker Museum, it combines evening networking, guest hosts, presentations, and tours highlighting his impact on Western New York. Each year, OLV's signature fundraising gala, Victory Nite, brings the community together for an evening of food, cocktails, and auctions and presents the Father Baker Service Awards.

From 2021 to 2026, OLV marked the 100th anniversary of the Basilica's consecration with a five-year Centennial Celebration, timed to mirror the years it took Father Baker to build the Basilica. The celebration paired restoration of the historic building, including the copper dome, masonry, pews, and artwork, with concerts, historical exhibits, children's events, and lectures. It concluded in May 2026 with a 1920s-themed Centennial Gala at The Statler in downtown Buffalo and a standing-room-only Centennial Mass led by Bishop Michael Fisher, followed by a community reception.

The Daniel B. Niederlander Award was established in 1975, in honor of Daniel B. Niederlander (1895-1964), a former president of the Museum, businessman, and dedicated civic leader.

The award is presented to a local education, cultural, or heritage organization for outstanding programming.

Award Criteria:

- The organization's overall program for the year must be of high caliber. The award should not be given for a particular event.
- Services should be directed at the entire population of the town, village, or other geographical area described in its charter. Particular value will be placed on service rendered to youth.
- Although occupation of a permanent headquarters is not a prerequisite, extended hours of service at a permanent or temporary headquarters is a factor in service to the community.
- Extensive involvement of volunteers should be emphasized and given special consideration.
- Interpretive programs, research, and reference services should be considered equally.
- The organization should participate in county, regional, state, and/or national historical activities.

THE OWEN B. AUGSPURGER AWARD

Honoring

Shane E. Stephenson



Shane's understanding and interpretation of history, comes from his enjoyment of learning about and attempting to understand people, people who he interacts with and the people of the past who have left evidence for us to follow. Shane came to this career path in 2011, and has worked hard and passionately to expand people's understanding of local, regional, and national history. He started working as an Archives Technician at The Buffalo History Museum under the leadership of Cynthia Van Ness, who gave him his first experience in the field of archives. He also enjoyed the interaction with those looking for certain historical items or looking to answer a question about the past.

Shane was proud to get a job at the Buffalo Naval Park, where he was the Director of Museum Collections for eight years. There he established new tours, new signage, built new relationships with volunteer groups and the veteran associations made up of those who served aboard the three historic vessels. All while processing roughly 10,000 manuscript collections, photos, and 3D artifacts. Shane's especially proud of the work to preserve and conserve over 300 2D and 3D artifacts that were onboard the ex-USS The Sullivans when she partially sank in 2022. He also enjoyed working his small business, which helps families, non-profits, and other organizations gain intellectual and physical control over their records. He's most proud of his work with the local musicians, Jackie Jacko, and Andy Anselmo, along with work for Oakwood Cemetery in Niagara Falls, and the Center for Inquiry in Amherst.

During this time he also published three historic picture books: Buffalo's East Side Industry, The Larkin Company, and The Buffalo Naval Park, bringing historical interpretation to purchasers of the books from all around the country. He's given hundreds of presentations around the community through individual partnerships and Erie County's University Express program. In addition, he's the Board President of the small and mighty Buffalo Presidential Center, a museum dedicated to telling the story of Buffalo's place in Presidential history. He's felt privileged and honored to learn and grow in this position for the past five years.

Shane is extremely proud to be considered a part of the Owen B. Augspurger "club" with previous award winners, and is honored to help carry on the Augspurger name. He recognizes the many, many people who guided and tutored him to achieve this award: his family, his colleagues, and his friends.

The Owen B. Augspurger Award was established in 1974 in honor of Owen B. Augspurger (1913-1969), a former president of the Museum, and a Red Jacket Award Recipient (1969). This award is presented to an individual for outstanding service to the cause of local history.

Award Criteria:

- The individual's activities have been performed during a signicant period of time, unless the committee finds unusual extenuating circumstances.
- The individual's contributions to local history may include publication of books, articles, or pamphlets; service in a historical agency; reporting of local history through the news media; collection of historical data or objects and provision for their public enjoyment; research and writing leading to broadening the knowledge of local history

THE RED JACKET AWARD

Honoring

Alphonso O'Neil-White and Marcia O'Neil-White



"It's as important to do good as it is to do well" is a guiding principle in the O'Neil- White family.

Driven by this principle, Marcia and Alphonso O'Neil-White landed in a most unlikely place, Louisville, KY, in the early '70's to start their careers and build a family. Marcia pursued her career in education administration and honed her skills as a 'troubled schools" specialist, while Alphonso practiced law at a law firm which served as regional counselor for many, if not most, of America's national labor unions. After that, he landed a spot at global healthcare company Humana Inc. as its labor and employment counsel. Marcia was fully engaged in assisting the Louisville school district in implementing its court-mandated school desegregation plan.

Alphonso and Marcia continued their community work organizing and establishing the Louisville Downtown Neighborhood Association. The two helped fund the startup organization by selling homemade doughnuts.

Although they called Louisville "home," they were recruited to their favorite city, Washington, DC, where Alphonso served as General Counsel for the trade association for America's health insurance industry. This gave him the opportunity to work in DC's so-called "Gucci Gulch" as a lobbyist for the association at the state and federal levels.

After having "done" DC, they settled in Buffalo. They often joke that the O'Neil-Whites were lured to Buffalo by its blue skies, warm lake breezes and perfect summer weather.

As President and CEO, Alphonso not only brought Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York back to its market leadership position, he positioned the company as an active force for community improvement. He helped to found one of Buffalo's most impactful educational initiatives – Say Yes Buffalo.

Alphonso played a pivotal role in the founding of Say Yes Buffalo, first recruiting the business community as the core supporters of the initiative. The program promises that each graduate of the Buffalo Public Schools will not face financial hurdles in seeking post-secondary attainment. It has served thousands of students since its inception and boasts a college-going rate well above the statewide average.

Marcia set her sights and energy on revitalizing Buffalo Prep. Founded by M&T Bank's late CEO, Bob Wilmers, Buffalo Prep provides intensive academic supports and other services for underprivileged students of color. Under Marcia's leadership, the program expanded dramatically in terms of student participation and fundraising. The program, like Say Yes Buffalo, boasts a college-going rate well above statewide averages.

While Say Yes Buffalo and Buffalo Prep are two high-impact, high-profile initiatives that Alphonso and Marcia count as crowning achievements, their other work in our community has been equally impressive.

Alphonso's work as chair of the Community Foundation's Board of Directors and the creation of the Racial Equity Round Table while in that role, and Marcia's pivotal role helping to establish the Read to Succeed program are just two examples. The Read to Succeed program has gained national recognition and support from AARP. AARP supports the program, not only because of its effectiveness with students, but because of its ability to involve and engage seniors as mentors and tutors.

They have both served on the boards of directors of a number of important local and national organizations. Marcia, for example, has served as board chair of the Garret Club, the WNY Education Cooperative, and the National Partnership for Education Access. Alphonso was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York after serving as chair of the Buffalo branch board. He served also as chair of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Board of Directors and as chair of Buffalo Toronto Public Media Board of Directors.

For the O'Neil-Whites, Buffalo is truly home, and they are committed to making it an even better place to live and work. In retirement, they have continued their active support for initiatives, programs, and organizations that work to improve both our business environment and the community at large.

The Red Jacket Award was established in 1957. It is presented by The Buffalo History Museum in recognition of quiet, continued, unbroken devotion to our civic progress and needs by one who, through such devotion, has thereby enlarged our awareness of our heritage in order that it may be built upon for the enrichment of our future.

The award is named after the renowned orator and Seneca leader, Sagoyewatha, or Red Jacket. In 1792, President George Washington presented Red Jacket with the medal after which our award is molded. It bears symbolic imagery of peaceful coexistence between the United States and Native Americans. In 2021, the Red Jacket Peace Medal was repatriated to the Seneca Nation. The medal is currently displayed at the Onohsagwë:dé Cultural Center in Salamanca.

The tradition of the Red Jacket Award is inspired by the imperative to continue to acknowledge those who, with steady service, strive to support the connections in our region with our heritage.

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We are proud to support an event that celebrates excellence, community leadership, and lasting contributions to our region.

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OWEN B. AUGSPURGER AWARD RECIPIENTS

1974	John W. Horton
1975	Roy E. Nagle†
1977	Olaf W. Shelgren, Jr.
1978	Austin M. Fox
1979	Richard C. Brown
1980	Joseph A. Grande, Ph.D.
1981	Lester W. Smith
1982	John W. Percy
1983	Edward E. Godfrey
1984	Gen. Brainard Prescott
1985	Monroe Fordham, Ph.D.
1986	Barbara Brandt
1987	John Conlin
1988	Lillian Geiger
1989	James Keysa
1990	Mike Vogel
1991	Msgr. Walter O. Kern
1992	William B. Hoyt†
1993	Andrea Shaw†
1994	Joseph Overfield
1995	Henry H. Baxter
1996	Milton Rogovin
1997	Scott Eberle David A. Gerber
1998	Thomas E. Leary Elizabeth C. Sholes
1999	Daniel I. Larkin
2000	Christopher Densmore
2001	Jack Quinan
2003	Theodore L. Lownie
2004	Dr. V. Roger Lalli
2005	Fred R. Whaley, Jr. Lillian S. Williams, Ph.D.
2006	Francis R. Kowsky, Ph.D.
2007	Joseph A. Grande, Ph.D. John C. Mohawk, Ph.D.
2009	Mark Goldman, Ph.D.
2010	Charles A. LaChiusa
2011	Douglas Kohler
2012	Christopher Hawley
2013	Madeline Davis Dr. Edwin A. Mirand
2014	Raymond Massey Molly Quackenbush
2015	Doug DeCroix
2016	Jennifer Liber Raines
2017	Dennis Galucki
2018	Martin Wachadlo
2019	William B. Koch†
2020	John A. Edens
2021	Lillion Batchelor Shonnie Finnegan
2022	Angela Keppel Paul McDonnell
2023	Melissa Dunlap Thomas Reigstad
2024	Tyler Bagwell
2025	Dawne Hoeg
2026	Shane E. Stephenson

† = *awarded posthumously*

The West Herr Automotive Group
proudly congratulates the
2026 Red Jacket Award recipients:

Alphonso & Marcia O'Neil-White

Shane Stephenson

OLV National Shrine & Basilica

Your leadership, dedication,
and countless contributions
continue to enrich the
Western New York community.

WEST HERR
NEW YORK

DANIEL B. NIEDERLANDER AWARD RECIPIENTS

1975	Old Amherst Colony Museum Park
1977	Historical Society of the Tonawandas, Inc.
1978	Tonawanda-Kenmore Historical Society
1979	Aurora Historical Society
1980	Eden Historical Society
1981	Lancaster Historical Society
1982	Evans Historical Society
1984	Newstead Historical Society
1985	Cheektowaga Historical Society
1986	Western New York Railway Historical Society
1987	Aurora Historical Society
1988	Elma Historical Society
1989	Buffalo Lighthouse Association
1990	Historical Society of the Tonawandas, Inc.
1991	Hamburg Historical Society
1992	Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks
1993	Orchard Park Historical Society
1994	Historical Society of the Town of Clarence
1995	Buffalo Fire Historical Society
1997	Michigan Street Preservation Corporation
1999	Graycliff Conservancy, Inc.
2001	Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Hist. Site
2003	The Benjamin and Dr. Edgar R. Cofeld Judaic Museum of Temple Beth Zion
2004	North Tonawanda History Museum
2005	Preservation Coalition of Erie County & Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier Polish Arts Club of Buffalo
2006	Am-Pol Eagle Newspaper
2007	Buffalo State College Maritime Center Forest Lawn Cemetery
2008	Central Terminal Restoration Corporation Shea's Performing Arts Cente
2009	Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier, Inc. Art Conservation Dept. at Buffalo State College
2010	Grant-Amherst Business Association
2011	Old Fort Niagara
2012	WNED Buffalo-Toronto
2013	The Hull Family Home & Farmstead
2014	The Martin House Restoration Corporation
2015	The Niagara 1812 Bicentennial Legacy Council
2016	The Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum
2017	Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York
2018	Niagara Frontier Council for the Social Studies
2019	West Seneca Historical Society and Museum
2020	Explore Buffalo
2021	The Colored Musicians Club
2022	Black Rock Historical Society
2023	Tonawanda-Kenmore Historical Society
2024	Buffalo Maritime Center Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry
2025	The Tonawanda Reservation Historical Society
2026	OLV National Shrine & Basilica

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OLV NATIONAL SHRINE & BASILICA

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1958	Charles Burchfield
1959	Hon. John Lord O'Brian
1960	Welles V. Moot
1961	Jane Keeler
1962	George Forman Goodyear Seymour Knox II
1963	Julian Park
1964	Dr. Clayton W. Green
1965	Fenton M. Parke
1966	Alfred Kirchhofer
1967	George F. Phillips
1968	Julius W. Pratt
1969	Charles Desmond Owen B. Augspurger
1970	Harold L. Olmsted
1971	Edwin F. Jaeckle
1972	Charles H. Diefendorf
1973	Frank A. Sedita
1974	Julia B. Reinstein
1975	William C. Baird
1976	Katherine & Franz T. Stone
1977	Mason O. Damon
1978	Robert B. Adam
1979	Elisabeth L. Petri
1980	Frank G. Evans
	Lydia T. Wright
1981	Peter G. Economou
1982	Ralph Loew
1983	Manly Fleischmann
1984	Cecilia Evans Taylor
1985	Father James Demske
1986	Seymour Knox III Northrup Knox
1987	John Koessler Paul Koessler
1988	Robert E. Rich, Sr.
1989	Robert D. Fernbach, Sr.
1990	Paul A. Schoellkopf, Jr. Margaret G. Swift
1991	Edward F. Walsh John N. Walsh, Jr.
1992	Robert J. Kresse Robert L. Wilson
1993	Jesse E. Nash, Jr. Mary-Kent Prentice
1994	Max B.E. Clarkson William M.E. Clarkson
1995	David W. Rumsey Robert G. Wilmers
1996	Joan Bozer
1997	William G. Gisel
1999	D. Bruce Johnstone Gail Johnstone
2000	Calvin Rand Charles Rand Penney
2001	Sue S. Gardner Kevin P. Gaughan
2002	Robert J.A. Irwin Frank B. Mesiah
2004	William R. Greiner John J. LaFalce
	J. Warren Perry
2005	Arnold B. Gardner Ann T. Mikoll Richard & Karen Penfold
2005	Judge John T. Curtin Sister Denise Roche
2005	James M. Wadsworth
2006	Richard C. Marcus
2007	Hon. George K. Arthur Herbert A. Hauptman, Ph.D.
2008	JoAnn Falletta Edwin T. Bean, Jr.
2009	Maryann Saccomando Freedman Dr. V. Roger Lalli
2010	Christopher T. Greene Finley R. Greene† Wayne D. Wisbaum
2011	Cindy Abbott Letro John N. Walsh, III
2012	Clement & Karen Arrison Thomas R. Beecher, Jr.
2013	James L. Magavern, Esq.
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2016	John & Carol Kociela Stanford Lipsey
2017	Eva M. Doyle
2018	Holly Augspurger Donaldson Jonathan L. White
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2020	Jake & Katie Schnieder
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2022	Casimiro D. Rodriguez, Sr. Shelley C. Drake
2023	Mary Wilson Alfred "Al" Price
2024	Scott & Kathy Bieler
2025	Dr. Lillian S. Williams
2026	Alphonso O'Neil-White Marcia O'Niel-White

† = *awarded posthumously*

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Alphonso O'Neil-White
& Marcia O'Neil-White

And thank you for the time, energy, and love you put into this community!

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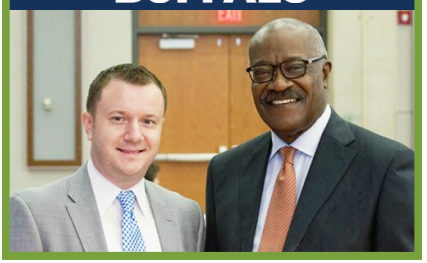

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– Coretta Scott King

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