**American Association for Affirmative Action Announces**

**2014 Awards Finalists**

***Leaders in the Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Civil Rights Fields will be honored at the Association’s 40th National Conference and Annual Meeting in Nashville***

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Washington, DC, June 1, 2014- The American Association for Affirmative Action (AAAA), an organization of equal opportunity, diversity and affirmative action professionals, announced the finalists of its annual awards program. The awards will be conferred at the Association’s 40th National Conference and Annual Meeting themed "40 Years of Affirmative Action: *Envisioning the Future*."  The meeting is being held at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel & Convention Center, 2800 Opryland Drive, Nashville, TN on June 3 - 6, 2014. The awards will be presented on Wednesday, June 4, from 12:00 - 1:45, at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel & Convention Center in Nashville Tennessee.

Each year, AAAA honors professionals working for their exemplary work in Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action. This year’s recipients are:

• Honorable Kathleen Martinez, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy, is the recipient of the Edward M. Kennedy Community Service Award.

• Dr. Louis Dale, the Vice President for Equity and Diversity at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, is the recipient of the Arthur A. Fletcher Lifetime Achievement Award.

• John D. González, the founder and CEO of JDG Associates, is the recipient of the Cesar Estrada Chavez Award.

• Texas Tech University is the recipient of the Champion of Diversity Award.

• Rev. James M. Lawson, Jr. is the recipient of the Drum Major for Justice Award.

AAAA will also honor Dr. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., the noted author and thought leader in Diversity Management, who passed away in 2013. His daughter, April Thomas, will receive the acknowledgement on her father’s behalf. The AAAA President, Gregory T. Chambers, will also confer the President’s Award on members of the Association who have made an outstanding service contribution to the Association.

For more information regarding each recipient, please see below.

"We are pleased to recognize these distinguished individuals and organizations for their contribution to the cause of access, equity and diversity,” said Richard Baker, J.D., Ph.D., Awards Committee Chair.  "Great honor is due to these trailblazers who have been outstanding in their fields,” added AAAA President Chambers.

The AAAA 40th National Conference and Annual Meeting is open to the press. For more information or to register for the Conference, go to [www.aaaaconference.org](http://www.aaaaconference.org/).

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[AAAA Conference Website](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001C4QaatDNjWq5dzUrs_Yg_GJwnN8UXAYskLyHTyDiHBBDIVNEWDkmhxTuypaSe43nXiW_Ik4CALb3dJVT6f90iOmVpjUhMkm6g82i4tyPEFm8-dpJJVYMz2rJyk5O4IiQKny1msB5W6jCE0qqBO9BIRC6jRCJefBg9S_YPcMMTvbcmK_JDe0ANMI_n8n1k9cnTfWMflOZqXVE-cgGKd1rdn06X8pmJyuzzfQJSnoy4qTwzFWFpR_I50zSAVYJFgyKcF34sBjLNEXG1agmzy3fQ6_EEpu4Z5F_MSeLmU49wHq08kw0ujWknhMuQlCx4-OC9BfcAeLR4ljh2awCpG6w1K2wBTjTwrMgUmazxomrTZiGipcQ-WjCsz4BGQSBuKUi1c2OL3VLkMY=&c=Dh2aFR5vbCz1v0L6AAHz-QKj959gAU6UiMOisewhyHgANN8Pam6b7Q==&ch=lh8yFKrfHDnHFhPkASCLn5u8C3yHnnR1PSci81M3WisIkQQpitTbnA==)

[AAAA Home Website](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001C4QaatDNjWq5dzUrs_Yg_GJwnN8UXAYskLyHTyDiHBBDIVNEWDkmhxTuypaSe43nlldnPKX_0ec5f8MToeTh6dg--xWJmArNlogCe3z63Ov1SQqfk2FsUFPL47z6xdp7deiJksfm3w-T0-t8WivTvJLGQPriHfdapvqY2TQL8WNs8-sbGen1x4aYp1qFcRU8zfdYO7xCG-uSYSn2mCMOm5IdWtvIPYWKn8uU8gojhdrWwvpInJWxFyAZuD3Bn1RbiAnULWLrhz3AAH0zz4hOBa02R2HdYc7zKqa7kDHm71yVJas0WZc4x6XqbkcT687pwSN36Ldbt3U=&c=Dh2aFR5vbCz1v0L6AAHz-QKj959gAU6UiMOisewhyHgANN8Pam6b7Q==&ch=lh8yFKrfHDnHFhPkASCLn5u8C3yHnnR1PSci81M3WisIkQQpitTbnA==)

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**The Honorable Kathleen Martinez Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy**

*Edward M. Kennedy Community Service Award*

*The award recognizes an individual or organization demonstrating outstanding community service.*

As Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy, Kathy Martinez leads the Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and advises the U.S. Secretary of Labor and internal agencies on how departmental regulations and policies impact people with disabilities. In ODEP, she oversees strategic planning and performance management for a number of policy initiatives to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to prepare for and succeed in employment. As part of this, Ms. Martinez established a logic model and identified corresponding metrics that are used to assess ODEP's progress towards its goal of improving the number and quality of job opportunities for people with disabilities in America's labor force.

Among ODEP's chief policy accomplishments during Ms. Martinez's tenure is assisting the department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs in developing and enacting new rules designed to strengthen Federal contractors' responsibilities to hire, retain and advance qualified people with disabilities under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under her leadership, ODEP also played a critical role in President Barack Obama's July 2010 Executive Order directing all federal agencies to increase the representation of people with disabilities in their workforces. As part of this, she oversaw the development of eFedLink, a first-of-its-kind online community of practice that facilitates the exchange of information and ideas about disability employment among federal hiring managers and human resources personnel.

Prior to being nominated by the President in 2009, Ms. Martinez was Executive Director of the World Institute on Disability, where she successfully managed a number of initiatives, among them Proyecto Visión, a national technical assistance center to increase employment opportunities for Latinos with disabilities in the U.S. She has also served on the National Council on Disability, the board of the U.S. Institute of Peace, and the State Department's advisory committee on disability and foreign policy. Ms. Martinez is a graduate of San Francisco State University

**Louis Dale, Ph.D.**

University of Alabama at Birmingham

*Arthur A. Fletcher Lifetime Achievement Award*

*The award recognizes a lifetime of achievement promoting and advocating for affirmative action, EEO and diversity*

Dr. Dale earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics from Miles College, his master's degree in mathematics from Atlanta University, and his doctorate in mathematics from the University of Alabama. He joined the UAB faculty in 1973. In 1977 he was promoted to Associate Professor, and to and full Professor in 1980. Dr. Dale served as Interim Chair of the Department of Mathematics from 1982-1984. He served as Associate Dean of the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics from 1987-1991. From 1991-1995 he served as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs before assuming the role of Associate Vice Provost for Minority and Special Programs. He was appointed to the new position Vice President for Equity and Diversity in 2003.

**John D. Gonzalez**

CEO, JDG Associates

*Cesar Estrada Chavez Award*

*Presented to an individual who has demonstrated leadership in support of workers' rights and humanitarian issues.*

John D. and Donna S. Gonzalez built JDG by consistently delivering excellent outcomes for their clients. Established in 1988, JDG has grown into one of the largest companies in the nation specializing in equal employment opportunity and diversity in the workplace. John and Donna have worked together for more than 25 years, always staying ahead of EEO legislative and regulatory developments and passing their knowledge and experience along to JDG’s clients. They have become recognized as community leaders and authorities on diversity and economic inclusion.

John Gonzalez has been recognized by Leadership San Antonio; he was an elected delegate on the White House Conference on Small Business, the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce selected him as Entrepreneur of the Year and Hispanic Business Magazine named him among the 100 Most Influential Hispanics in the Nation. He is also co-founder of the Boerne Chamber of Commerce Workforce Readiness Initiative and a Board Member of the American Association for Affirmative Action. Mr. Gonzalez is a frequent contributor to national publications and a popular guest lecturer and presenter. John has been a highly respected member of the AAAA Board of Directors. As Legislative Chair, John assisted the association to raise its profile in Washington, DC, from Congress to the White House and around the nation. His dedication to preparing the next generation of students of color has provided the impetus for the AAAA’s establishment of the Fund for Leadership, Equity, Access and Diversity and has fueled the association’s vision and determination to work towards a future where all students are well-prepared to enter the workplace. AAAA thanks John for his dedication and indefatigable service.

**Texas Tech University**

Lubbock, Texas

*Champion of Diversity Award*

*Presented to an organization or corporation for outstanding achievements in promoting diversity in the workforce.*

The Division of Institutional Diversity, Equity & Community Engagement is committed to student success by preparing learners to be ethical leaders for a diverse and globally competitive workforce. In support of the university's priorities, Texas Tech strives to create collaborative partnerships among faculty and staff, community organizations, and students through programs, activities and events that develop students' professional skills, individual creativity, personal excellence and social awareness.

The University’s vision embraces the essence of life-long success. Its vision is to be an inclusive environment where students and faculty collaboratively share ideas while cultivating a culture of inclusive excellence by engaging in programs, activities, and events that advance the university's priorities. The Division of Institutional Diversity, Equity & Community Engagement provides k-12 programming designed to engage students at a younger age and inspire them to achieve higher education. These efforts are key to the growth of the community, as students get an opportunity to participate in hands on activities and explore Texas Tech University's campus. Texas Tech University is committed to creating tomorrow's leaders by preparing them for a global world through cultural exchanges, key support services, and a dynamic academic environment where students, faculty and staff engage in discussion about global topics. The Division also promotes cross-cultural awareness through educational collaborations with faculty and staff to train students for ethical leadership for a diverse and globally competitive workforce.

Among the University’s awards and accolades for its leadership in diversity are:

* The INSIGHT Into Diversity 'Higher Education Excellence in Diversity' (HEED) Award
* Military Advanced Education: "Military Friendly College & University" in 2012, 2013, and 2014
* "Military Friendly" by G.I. Jobs in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014.
* In 2014, Texas Tech University was recognized by Military Times as #31 in "Best for Vets"
* In 2014, Texas Tech University was recognized by Military Times as #13 in "Best for Business Schools for Vets".
* Each year the Hispanic Association of Women selects five winners for the Hispania of the Year Award. Heather Martinez, Director of the Office of Community Engagement and IDEAL, has been announced the 2014 winner in the Education category
* TTU has been recognized by AAUW as one of seven Schools That Empower Women for 2014.
* Named the Gamma Nu Chapter of Iota Iota Iota (Triota), the Women's Studies Honor Society.
* Texas Tech University received a grant from the Aurora Foundation to provide training and education for the faculty and staff of the Texas Tech University System.

**Dr. James Morris Lawson, Jr.**

*Drum Major for Justice Award*

*A special acknowledgement of the extraordinary contributions that an organization or individual, including a public servant or one who has held an elective office or appointment to public service, has made to the cause of equity, access and diversity.*

James Lawson was born in Pennsylvania in 1928. His father and grandfather were Methodist ministers, and Lawson received his local preacher's license in 1947, the year he graduated from high school. At his Methodist college in Ohio, he joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), America's oldest pacifist organization. After spending time in prison for refusing the Korean War draft, he obtained his B.A. in 1952, and spent the next three years as a campus minister and teacher at Hislop College in Nagpur, India. While in India, Lawson eagerly read of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the emerging nonviolent resistance movement back in the United States.

By 1957, Lawson decided he could no longer sit on the sidelines. He began holding seminars to train volunteers in Gandhian tactics of nonviolent direct action. James Lawson helped coordinate the Freedom Rides in 1961 and the Meredith March in 1966, and played a major role in the sanitation workers strike of 1968. On the eve of his assassination, Martin Luther King called Lawson "the leading theorist and strategist of nonviolence in the world."

In 1974, Lawson moved to Los Angeles to be the pastor of Holman Methodist Church. He spoke out against racism, and challenged the cold war and U.S. military involvement throughout the world. Even after his retirement, Lawson was protesting with the Janitors for Justice in Los Angeles, and with gay and lesbian Methodists in Cleveland.

Congressman John Lewis, and recent author of March Book 1 recounts his activists years in the Civil Rights Movement, and mentions our own Reverend James M. Lawson Jr. as one of the most influential men in his life.

**Roosevelt Thomas, M.B.A., D.B.A.**

*Acknowledged Posthumously*

Dr. Roosevelt Thomas was at the forefront of developing and implementing innovative concepts and strategies for maximizing organizational and individual potential through diversity management. He was the author of seven published books; his most recent, World Class Diversity Management: A Strategic Approach. Dr. Thomas consulted with numerous Fortune 500 companies, professional firms, government entities, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions, and he spoke frequently at national conferences and industry seminars.

He was recognized by The Wall Street Journal as one of the top ten consultants in the country, elected as a Fellow by the National Academy of Human Resources, cited by Human Resource Executive as one of HR’s Most Influential People, awarded the “Distinguished Contribution to Human Resources Development” Award by the American Society of Training and Development, honored with the “Trailblazers in Diversity” Award by Bennett College, and designated an Inaugural “Legends of Diversity” Honoree by the International Society of Diversity and Inclusion Professionals.

Dr. Thomas held a D.B.A. in Organizational Behavior from Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration; a M.B.A. in Finance from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business Administration; and a B.A. in Mathematics from Morehouse College. He helped develop and implement the Coca-Cola Co.’s Diversity Leadership Training Academy of Atlanta in 2000. “Ruby Thomas said her husband spent the last 29 years of his life helping people and companies embrace true diversity. She said he wanted people to know diversity not only encompasses race, ethnicity and gender, but also sexual orientation, age, geographic origins and educational background.”(Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 23, 2013).