

12th Annual African American Trailblazer Service Awards

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Las Vegas City Hall
495 S. Main St.
Las Vegas, NV 89101

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BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AWARD

This award recognizes local business professionals who have displayed entrepreneurial character, high standards, innovative professional practice and committed support of their local community.

A'Esha Goins

This Business and Economic Advancement Award winner embodies the innovative professional practice that is the hallmark of this award. While A'Esha Goins has worn many titles throughout her career, the one that matters most to her is community servant. Her journey has been guided by a simple belief: everyone deserves access to opportunity and real change happens when we empower others to lead.



Service runs deep in Goin's blood. As the daughter of a retired IBEW union worker and evangelist and the goddaughter of the late Willie J. Wynn, she grew up watching what it meant to show up for people—whether at the bargaining table, in the pulpit, or in the community. Before she became known as "Coach" she served as a minister in the church, where she learned that true leadership is about meeting people where they are and empowering them to rise. That foundation of faith and service shaped everything that would come after.

Her path to advocacy began with a personal mission. In 2015, she founded Blackabis, a cannabis blog that started conversations many were afraid to have—breaking down the stigma that Black communities faced around cannabis use, decriminalization and legalization. What began as a blog grew into something much larger. She became deeply involved in developing Southern Nevada's medical marijuana industry, bringing her expertise in operational logistics to help build an emerging sector.

By 2019, she had seen firsthand how policy shapes lives. She founded Black Joy Consulting to advocate for cannabis reform during Nevada's 80th Legislative Session. It was during this time that she earned the name many know her by today: "Coach." During this time, she discovered advocacy alone wasn't enough. She knew that communities devastated by the war on drugs needed more than policy changes—they needed resources, training and pathways to economic opportunity. This realization led her to establish the Cannabis Equity and Inclusion Community (CEIC).

The CEIC is an organization anchored in the principles of freedom, equity and opportunity. Through CEIC, she secured \$250,000 in grant funding specifically designed to provide cannabis business training programs for those who had been locked out of the industry. The programs didn't just teach business skills, they opened doors, creating real opportunities for marginalized families in Las Vegas to participate in an industry that had historically criminalized them.

Her work caught the attention of community and government leaders alike. She was appointed to the Governor's Cannabis Advisory Commission Board, where she was

named to the first chair—an appointment designated for an individual with demonstrated expertise in criminal justice reform.

Her commitment to building leaders extends beyond cannabis. She developed the “Empowerment Through Action” candidate training program. A training program to equip everyday community members with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to run for office and lead change from within the system. Her philosophy is simple: if you want to see different outcomes, you need different people at the table. Today, she continues to run cohorts of this transformative program, nurturing the next generation of community leaders.

Today, Goins serves as first vice president of the NAACP Las Vegas Branch, where she continues her lifelong commitment to civil rights, justice and community empowerment. Through her firm, Black Joy Consulting, she provides government affairs, advocacy, strategic outreach and community engagement services, working alongside organizations and leaders who share her vision for a more equitable Nevada.

Her work is rooted in a belief that justice isn’t just about reforming laws—it’s about restoring dignity, creating opportunities and empowering people to write their own stories.

When she’s not serving her community, Goins treasures time with her son, her family and her friends. You can keep up with her journey on social media: Every_1coach.



EDUCATOR AWARD

This award honors those who, as a teacher, instructor or school administrator, have demonstrated excellence in mentoring, guiding and preparing students to achieve their full potential.

Jennifer Young

Jennifer Young exemplifies the spirit of the Educator Award. Young's professional journey reflects a deep rich commitment to education, guidance, and mentorship. A lifelong public servant, her professional career has been rooted in healthcare and education. She spent more than 20 years at University Medical Center in a variety of roles, most notably as a patient advocate, where she worked closely with patients and their families to ensure their voices were heard and their needs addressed. She later served at the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health in the Department of Caregiver and Community Education as an administrative program coordinator. In this role, she oversaw the center's library and supported patients and families navigating neurodegenerative conditions such as dementia and multiple sclerosis, while connecting them to critical local resources.



In 2018, she joined the Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine at UNLV, where she currently serves as director of community engagement. In this role, she teaches medical students, builds meaningful community partnerships and develops student service and research opportunities. As a medical educator, she is deeply committed to ensuring that future physicians are equipped to recognize and address the social, economic and structural barriers patients face both inside and outside the exam room. In recognition of her dedication to service learning and community engagement, she received an honorable mention for the UNLV Service-Learning Award in 2025.

Young's achievements are rooted in early beginnings that cultivated a commitment to service. Raised in a military family, she spent much of her formative years living abroad in Asia and Europe experiences that shaped her global perspective and life-long commitment to service. As a teenager, her family returned stateside to Nellis Air Force Base, where they put down roots and grew to love Las Vegas, a community she is proud to call home. Outside of her professional life, she treasures time with her nieces, nephews and her dog, Fergus. She is deeply passionate about children's issues and advocacy. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, outdoor concerts and reading mystery novels.

A proud graduate of Rancho High School, she earned her bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She also holds a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in health policy from Indiana University, Bloomington. Reflective of her abiding commitment to education, Young is currently pursuing a Doctor of Public Policy at UNLV, where her doctoral work focuses on addressing social needs within clinical settings and her long-standing dedication to improving patient-centered care.

COMMUNITY ACTIVISM AND POLITICS AWARD

This award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated through their achievements the ability to advocate, organize and engage citizens and inform public policy on issues that improve the quality of life for the community.

Dwayne Henderson

Dwayne Henderson personifies community engagement, integrity, and commitment. He has been dedicated to community service since the age of 15, continuously working to make a positive impact through mentorship, outreach and volunteerism. Moreover, he has proudly served in law enforcement since 2006, starting his career with the Nevada Department of Corrections before moving to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) in 2015. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated leadership, mentorship and a strong commitment to community engagement. He has held multiple specialized roles, including range instructor, defensive tactics instructor and CPR instructor. He has also served on the Community Engagement Redirection and Education Team and the Homeless Outreach Team, teams committed to building trust and strengthening relationships between law enforcement and the community.



With eye toward transforming public safety for the betterment of the community, he coordinates the LVMPD Black Community Alliance, where he leads initiatives that promote collaboration between the department and community organizations to encourage unity, education and empowerment. Additionally, he is an active member of the Black Police Association, helping lead efforts to strengthen relationships between law enforcement and the community. His dedication extends beyond my professional duties. Henderson is a proud 25-year member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., where he strives to uphold the organization's principles of brotherhood, scholarship and service.

Every day he strives to represent integrity, service and compassion and to inject humanity into everything he does. His experience reflects his ongoing commitment to public safety, youth development and bridging the gap between the police and the communities they serve. As a devoted family man who loves spending time with his wife, kids and extended family, he takes pride in being a supportive husband, father and family member, always striving to set a strong example of integrity, compassion and hard work. Whether through family activities, mentorship, or community engagement, his commitment to family extends beyond his home, reflecting the same dedication and care he brings to his work and to the community.

His commitment and dedication are further reflected in his educational journey. He is a proud graduate of Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center High School and holds an associate degree in Criminal Justice. In addition to his formal education, he has completed numerous professional development courses in leadership, defensive tactics and instructor-level training. He is committed to lifelong learning, personal growth and leading by example both in his profession and in his community. In his free time, he enjoys basketball, traveling, fitness, outdoor activities, and spending quality time with his family.

TYRONE THOMPSON EMERGING LEADER AWARD

This award celebrates an up-and-coming individual who demonstrates a commitment to leadership and substantial potential for innovation, creativity, vision and positive influence.

Angel L. Lash

Angel Lash typifies the ideals of the Tyrone Thompson Emerging Leader Award. With nearly 15 years of experience in the behavioral health field, her career spans private sector, nonprofit and government roles, providing both direct and indirect services to adults and youth affected by mental health and substance use challenges. Her work has included serving as a therapist and court liaison for youth parole and drug court participants, contributing to Dependency Mother's Drug Court programs, participating in Clark County Social Service Coordinated Entry housing groups and holding leadership roles at nonprofit organizations overseeing housing grants, case managers and transitional housing programs. She currently serves at the Eighth Judicial District Court as the program coordinator for the Law Enforcement Intervention for Mental Health and Addiction (LIMA) Diversion Program, a collaborative partnership between the court and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. LIMA offers a voluntary pathway to recovery for individuals experiencing substance use disorders, mental health challenges and homelessness, helping participants avoid unnecessary involvement in the justice system. In this role, she continues to champion innovative, compassionate approaches to public safety and public health.



A dedicated community leader, she has organized and supported numerous community events, conferences, coalition meetings and educational presentations focused on serving vulnerable populations. Most recently, she helped plan and organize "Narcan at Night," a citywide day of service through Mobilize Recovery, which engaged more than 400 volunteers to distribute Narcan kits across Las Vegas and expand overdose prevention education. This initiative and other impacts have been widely recognized. She has received commendations from the LVMPD Behavioral Health Unit for exceptional dedication to the success of the LIMA Program in 2021 and 2025. Additional honors include the Community Shining Star Award from True Beginnings (2021), TINHIIH's Boots on the Ground Award (2022), the Public Health Leadership Award (2023), Women Empowerment Award (2024), Women of Empowerment Community Leadership Award (2025), recognition as a Phenomenal Woman Making a Difference by House of Vegas Pride (2025), the Care Coalition's Echoes of Change Award (2025), Mobilize Recovery Bridge Builder Award (2025) and the Sister of the Year Award from the Stretch for Change.

Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, she relocated to California in 2005 to pursue her college education. In 2008, she made Nevada her home. Here she built both her family and her career in service to the community. She is a devoted wife, daughter, mother, business owner and community advocate whose life and career reflect a

deep commitment to service, equity, and empowerment. A former basketball player, she is actively engaged in numerous professional and civic organizations, including the Southern Nevada Opioid Advisory Council, PACT Coalition, National Action Council, NAACP, Human Rights Campaign and the ACLU. She is a former Secretary of the Chi Sigma Iota National Honor Society for Counselors, a member of Phi Theta Kappa, co-owner of an online direct sales business and is in the process of founding her own nonprofit organization.

Her academic background includes a Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, earned in 2013; a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film from UNLV in 2010; and an Associate of Arts in General Education from Cerro Coso Community College in Ridgecrest, California, completed in 2007. She holds multiple professional licenses, including licensed clinical professional counselor, licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselor and licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselor supervisor.



SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY AWARD

This award will be presented to a spiritual leader who has transcended organizational boundaries to promote spiritual and religious growth, partnership and engagement through inspired action and visionary leadership.

Chaplain Michael D. Thrower

Chaplain Michael D. Thrower epitomizes the values of the Spiritual Community Award. A man of deep faith and service, he is an ordained chaplain with Messages of Faith Ministries and has dedicated decades of his life to mentoring, spiritual care and community support. He has mentored youth since 1992, has been an ordained chaplain since 2012, a religious academy instructor since 2018 and a nonprofit business owner since 2011. He is also an Area Representative and Senior-Level Police Chaplain with the International Conference of Police Chaplains. Through faith, leadership and unwavering compassion, he has spent more than three decades uplifting youth, families, first responders, veterans and underserved communities, making a lasting impact across Southern Nevada.



Additionally, he is an alumnus of multiple law enforcement and civic leadership programs, including the Citizen Police Academy Alumni Association, Metro MVP and the North Las Vegas Police Citizen Alumni Association. His chaplaincy service extends across numerous agencies and organizations, including the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 1, Clark County School District Police Department, Boulder City Police Department, Trails End Warrior Ranch and the Nevada Police Foundation, where he serves as Board Chaplain.

In addition to his chaplaincy work, he is the CEO of Adopt-A-Cop Corporation and Community Connect, Inc., two nonprofit organizations focused on strengthening relationships between public servants and the communities they serve. He is an Angel Tree lead coordinator, a mentor for the Clark County School District, a Sunday school teacher at Second Baptist Church and a Purchasing Coordinator for the Clark County School District, where he has been employed since 1998. His volunteer service exceeds 19,000 hours through the Metro Volunteer Program since 2017, underscoring his extraordinary dedication to the community.

His service has been widely recognized with numerous honors, including the Rebel Vet Salute for exceptional support of veterans and military families (2025), Certificates of Recognition from the city of North Las Vegas for supporting the veteran community (2025), a Letter of Commendation from the Boulder City Police Department Chief of Police (2024), appointment as senior-level police chaplain with ICPC (2024) and multiple community and service awards from faith-based, law enforcement and nonprofit organizations. He was also recognized for his emergency service during the COVID-19 pandemic and has received accolades such as the FOX5 Shining Star Award, West Care Servant Heart Award and the Nevada/California Interstate Missionary Baptist Church Community Award.

He has a commitment to lifelong learning that is reflected in extensive training and continuing education in chaplaincy, leadership, crisis response, resiliency and pastoral counseling. His education includes a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, attendance at Navajo Community College and graduation from Clark High School. He has completed advanced certifications and training in crisis chaplaincy, moral injury, resiliency, Christian life coaching, emergency response, trauma intervention and youth advocacy.

He has been married to his beautiful wife for 13 years and is the proud father of three biological children, one son and two daughters, as well as two stepsons. His family continues to grow and includes two godsons, one granddaughter and a grandson expected soon. He is also blessed with two sisters, a devoted aunt, an incredible mother and three loyal boxer dogs who keep life full and joyful. Outside of his service work, he enjoys collecting Mr. Potato Head characters and spending time solving puzzles.



SPECIAL APPRECIATION GOES TO THE FOLLOWING

African American Trailblazer Service Awards
Ad Hoc Committee members for their time, commitment and
contribution to the success of the Trailblazer event.

Jackie Brantley

Claytee White

Asha Jones



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