

*10th Annual
African American
Trailblazer
Service Awards*

Jan. 25, 2024



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

Jessica "Jess Flo" Washington

Business and Economic Advancement Award



Jessica "Jess Flo" Washington is a force of inspiration, resilience, and community impact. Originally from Chicago, as a devoted mother to a non-verbal autistic son and a daughter in her junior year at UNLV, Washington's life is a testament to overcoming obstacles and pursuing dreams against all odds.

With over thirteen years of dedicated service at Stations Casinos, Washington has carved a niche for herself as a spoken word artist, community activist, and autism advocate. Washington channeled her passion for poetry into giving a voice to her son and others. Her commitment to raising awareness about autism led her to found "I Am Autism" in 2017, a program dedicated to increasing autism awareness in the African American community.

In addition to her advocacy work, Washington is the founder of "Black Girls Inspired", a women's empowerment organization established in 2007, and People of Extraordinary Talent (P.O.E.T.), formed in 2008 to integrate the poetry community more actively into the broader community. She is a member of the Urban Chamber of Commerce, where her commitment to community building is further demonstrated, having earned their 2021 Women in Business and Politics Award.

Washington's impact extends beyond her advocacy and community work into the world of spoken word poetry. She graced the stage at the 2018 Women's March, using her words to inspire and empower. Her dedication to social causes and community building earned her the proclamation of Jessica "Jess Flo" Washington Day in 2018 and recognition from Congressman Steven Horsford for her work with "I Am Autism".

In 2019, a unique turn of events led Washington to combine her love for balloons with her advocacy for autism and she began creating balloons for children with autism during a youth camp. This unexpected venture gained immense popularity on social media, leading her to attend balloon school in Tennessee, generously sponsored by an anonymous donor.

Since then, Washington's balloon business has thrived, showcasing her entrepreneurial spirit and determination. Her company has achieved significant milestones, serving notable clients such as Pfizer, the city of Las Vegas, Dunkin Donuts, and various Las Vegas casinos. Notably, Washington's business proved to be pandemic-proof, reaching six figures by its second year, a rare feat in the business world. Her company, Vegas Valley Balloons and Events, was named one of Vegas' top ten balloon businesses by Solesh magazine in 2023.

Beyond her business success, Washington remains committed to community service. She has been recognized with numerous awards, including the NAACP Legacy Builders Award (2018) as well as the Station Casinos Frank Fertitta Community Service Award (2022). Washington has also organized impactful events from community birthday parties for the less fortunate, to The Trayvon Martin

Rally for Justice, to Letters to My Sister/Brother, all fostering unity in the African American community and beyond.

Through teaching balloon classes, sharing her poetic gift, and outreach events, Washington continues to inspire and uplift. Her dedication to letting life flow, both in words and actions, serves as a beacon of hope for all who meet her.

Kelvin Watson

Community Activism and Politics Award



Kelvin Watson, widely recognized as a visionary leader and influential figure in the library industry, has dedicated his career to expanding access to knowledge and community resources. A U.S. Army veteran, Watson's commitment to outreach, technology, and innovative programming has reshaped the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District (LVCCLD), making it a dynamic hub for education, empowerment and community connection.

In his role as Executive Director of LVCCLD, Watson oversees twenty-five branches, serving a vast community and a collection of 3.2 million items. He has ushered in a new era of leadership marked by innovation and inclusivity.

Watson's leadership is evident in his strategic initiatives that go beyond traditional library services. Notably, in 2021, he established a groundbreaking partnership with the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada, bringing digital access to the library for bus riders. This initiative not only bridged the digital divide but also earned an Honorable Mention from the ULC Innovation Awards. Additionally, the library's literacy programs for adults and children, under Watson's leadership, received the prestigious Crystal Bookmark Award from the Las Vegas Book Festival.

One of Watson's recent projects was the May 2023 introduction of a book vending machine at the Boulevard Mall, providing easy access to a world of discovery, in English and Spanish, with a simple swipe of a library card. This pioneering endeavor exemplifies Watson's commitment to bringing the power of libraries directly to the people.

Watson's community activism extends to the principles of inclusivity and welcoming spaces within the libraries. His emphasis on "inviting the uninvited" ensures that everyone, regardless of income level or appearance, feels welcomed. Through diverse programs and services, he actively promotes inclusivity and engages with the communities served by the library system.

Watson's leadership goes beyond the library system as he actively engages

in various community and professional affiliations. He sits on the board of the Nevada Faith and Health Coalition and is a life member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. Additionally, he serves as a Workforce Connections LEO Board Member and is a delegate to the Online Computer Library Center Global Council. As a board member of the Digital Public Library of America and a member of the American Library Association, Watson continues to shape the future of library services on a national level.

Watson's educational journey reflects his commitment to continuous learning. With a Master of Business Administration from Georgia Southwestern State University, a Master of Library Science from North Carolina Central University, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Lincoln University. He combines a diverse skill set with a strategic mindset.

Throughout his distinguished career, Watson has held key positions in various library and information organizations, including roles at the USDA National Agricultural Library, Queens Borough Public Library, Broward County Government, and The Library Corporation (TLC).

Watson's contributions have not gone unnoticed. He has received numerous awards, including the prestigious American Library Association Medal of Excellence Award in 2023. His recognition extends to the community, where he received the 2023 James Anderson Visionary Award from the NAACP Las Vegas Chapter.

As a progressive leader, community advocate, and innovator in the library industry, Kelvin Watson continues to leave an enduring legacy, shaping the future of libraries for generations to come.



Melvin Valentine Jr.

Educator Award



Melvin Valentine Jr., is a tenacious individual who has turned adversity into opportunity, emerging as a prominent figure in community development and STEM education. Raised in the inner city of Riverside California, Valentine's journey has been marked by resilience and a commitment to making a difference.

Valentine's academic journey led him to graduate from California State University, San Bernardino with a bachelor's degree in human communication. Armed with his education and a passion for community service, he embarked on a 20-year career dedicated to developing effective public and private partnerships. His leadership philosophy centers on servitude, guiding him in every project he undertakes.

In his role as STEM Manager for Nevada Partners, Valentine is at the forefront of designing, implementing, and managing various STEM programs. These initiatives include after-school programs, workforce initiatives, and educational outreach programs targeting students in low-income communities. Collaborating with school administrators, teachers, and community partners, Valentine identifies opportunities to bring STEM education to underserved students.

Valentine's impact extends to the STEM Center for Excellence, a visionary facility fueled by a \$1.2 million investment from the city of North Las Vegas' Choice Neighborhood Initiative. Here, he developed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion business incubator and a digital marketing career pathway, showcasing his commitment to creating opportunities for the community.

As the President of Valentine Communications, a public/private partnership consulting firm, he played a pivotal role in coordinating and developing a community engagement plan for the city of North Las Vegas' Choice Neighborhood program. Additionally, he designed and implemented a micro-business development program for minority youth, furthering economic empowerment in the community.

Valentine's dedication to education is evident in his role as the Career Technology Education (CTE) Department Chair for Mojave High School from 2016 to 2021. In this capacity, he restructured standard operating procedures, led a three-year business marketing program, and incorporated project-based learning pedagogy.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Valentine's commitment to community service is reflected in his volunteer work as the Youth Ministry Assistant at First A.M.E. Church (2013-2014). Here, he developed curriculum for youth conferences, implemented youth ministry membership campaigns, and forged strategic partnerships with community organizations.

Valentine has received the Riverside County NAACP Youth of the Year award in 2004-2005, the California Black Correctional Workers Youth of the Year, and the Verizon Innovative Learning Fellowship through Arizona State University in 2017-2018.

Melvin Valentine Jr.'s work helps others wield the power of education and demonstrates his steadfast commitment to community development. His impact in the fields of STEM education, community engagement, and youth empowerment establishes him as a catalyst for growth and positive change.



Imam Fateen Seifullah

Spiritual Community Award



Imam Fateen Seifullah stands as a pillar of strength, compassion, and leadership within the Las Vegas community. Married for 28 years to his late wife, Nisaa Seifullah, he attributes much of his success as a trailblazer to their partnership and her unwavering support. Imam Seifullah has recently remarried and is excited to continue his impactful work with his new partner in life.

Since 1999, Imam Seifullah has served as the Imam of Masjid As-Sabur, the oldest mosque in the Las Vegas area, and since 2004, he has been the executive director of Al-Maun (Neighborly Needs) of Las Vegas.

In recent years, Imam Seifullah has undertaken transformative initiatives in the Historic Westside. Initiating the development of the "Muslim Village," he and his congregation have worked tirelessly to create a safe space, offering facilities such as a free medical clinic, a food pantry, a library, a community garden, and a school for youth. The vision includes providing affordable housing, invigorating the community, and fostering inclusivity, with services available to anyone in need.

Imam Seifullah holds a bachelor's degree in theology from the Graduate Theological Foundation and a Master of Divinity/Islamic Chaplaincy from Claremont University. Currently pursuing an Associate's in Islamic Psychology from the Islamic Online University, he looks forward to furthering his studies with a Doctorate in Divinity from the Claremont School of Theology, focusing on Spiritual Renewal, Contemplative Practices, and Spiritual Leadership.

Imam Seifullah has participated in numerous Arabic studies programs, locally and abroad, enhancing his understanding of language and culture. His commitment to lifelong learning reflects his dedication to serving his community with wisdom and compassion.

Imam Seifullah's commitment to community service and interfaith work is evident in his extensive involvement in various organizations. Currently sitting on the board of the Nevada Faith and Health Coalition, he has been actively engaged in interfaith initiatives for over two decades. His dedication extends beyond religious boundaries, fostering understanding and cooperation among diverse communities.

A lover of chess, Imam Seifullah co-founded the local youth group Chess4Life, providing a platform for young minds to develop strategic thinking and build valuable life skills. An avid reader and world traveler, he uses these passions to connect with others, forging lifelong relationships and promoting cultural exchange.

Imam Seifullah's has received numerous awards at the local, state, and national levels. Notably, the award from the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace, where he joined Rabbi's, Priests, and Imams on a journey to Jerusalem, promoting peaceful relations and coexistence, remains a source of pride.

Imam Fateen Seifullah's journey is characterized by resilience, compassion, and a commitment to fostering unity. His leadership has left an indelible mark on the Las Vegas community, transcending religious and cultural boundaries and where he endeavors to have the light of God outshine the lights of the Las Vegas Strip.



Dr. Keith Rogers

Tyrone Thompson Emerging Leader Award



Dr. Keith Rogers stands as a distinguished figure whose work has been dedicated to transforming the landscape of education, community service, and mentorship.

Since 1999, Dr. Rogers has been a driving force in securing millions of grant funds, directing these resources toward assisting low-income, first-generation students in Clark County. His vision and tireless efforts have not only facilitated access to college but also ensured the success of these students in their academic pursuits. This commitment is reflected in the growth of the largest suite of grant-funded programs in the country, housed at UNLV's Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach, which has flourished under his leadership as Deputy Executive Director, from three grants to an impressive thirty.

In 2022, Dr. Rogers further extended his impact by securing a grant to provide mentoring support to high school students. This initiative underscores his belief in mentoring and guiding the next generation toward academic success and personal growth.

His dedication to education extends beyond the grants he secures. With a BS in Management Information Systems, an MBA in Finance, and a DBA in Entrepreneurship, Dr. Rogers combines academic prowess with real-world experience. His certifications as a Project Management Professional and Six Sigma Master Black Belt reflect his commitment to excellence and efficiency.

In recognition of his exemplary leadership and continuous dedication to UNLV, Dr. Rogers was recently appointed as the Vice President of Student Affairs, a position earned without a nationwide search. His prior service as the interim VP for a year reflects the trust placed in his extensive skill set and unwavering commitment to the university.

Outside the academic realm, Dr. Rogers dedicates considerable time to community service. His involvement in various boards, including Vice Chair for the Clark County Library District, Silver State Schools Credit Union supervisory committee, and board member of Diversity in Leadership, demonstrates his commitment to the overall well-being of the community. Notably, as the President of the Theta Pi Lambda Foundation, he plays a crucial role in steering its mission.

Dr. Rogers is not just a leader in his professional life; he is also an active member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., where he served as the Regional Director of Conventions and earned accolades like 2022 Western Region Lumina Award and 2023 Tri-State District Alumni Brother of the Year. His humility is reflected in the countless hours volunteered to local organizations, providing mentorship and guidance on securing and managing grant funds.

What sets Dr. Rogers apart is not just his impressive list of accomplishments but his humble demeanor and genuine passion for making a difference. Whether working on his car, engaging in home DIY projects, or spending time with his two youngest children, Dr. Rogers remains selflessly committed to the betterment of others.

Dr. Lisa Morris Hibbler

Impact Award



Dr. Lisa Morris Hibbler is a vanguard leader, dedicated to creating positive change and addressing the challenges faced by underserved communities. With a profound understanding of the struggles that many individuals and families endure, she has made it her life's mission to uplift and empower through various avenues, including mentorship programs, educational outreach, and community development.

Dr. Morris Hibbler's commitment to service is evident in her extensive involvement with social and community organizations. As a Silver Star Member and Past President of the Psi Upsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., she exemplifies leadership and community engagement. Her role as a Girl Scout Troop Leader and involvement with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program underscores her dedication to the well-being and development of youth. Her membership in the American Legion Auxiliary, Post 229, since 1983, demonstrates her enduring support for veterans and their families.

Dr. Morris Hibbler's academic journey reflects her commitment to excellence. With a Doctor of Public Administration from the University of La Verne, a Master of Public Administration from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies, she has built a solid foundation for her impactful career. She was a 2014 recipient of the alumni of the year award from the UNLV Greenspun College of Urban Affairs and her continuous pursuit of knowledge is evident in certificates from prestigious institutions like the Harvard John F. Kennedy School Executive Education.

During her distinguished near 27-year tenure with the city of Las Vegas, Dr. Morris Hibbler held influential roles, including as an International City/County

Management Association Credentialed (ICMA) Deputy City Manager and Chief Community Services Officer. Dr. Morris Hibbler emerged as a proven strategist with an exceptional track record with extensive expertise in social equity, workforce development, and community capacity building.

Currently, as the Executive Director of The Shaquille O'Neal Foundation, Co-Founder of JBM Strategic Partners LLC., and a Professor of Practice at UNLV, Dr. Morris Hibbler continues to shape the landscape of positive social change.

Dr. Morris Hibbler's accolades and awards speak volumes about her commitment to excellence and community impact. She was recognized as a 2021 Women to Watch by Nevada Business Magazine and as the 2021 Women Inspiring Nevada Honoree by Vegas Inc. Her recognition as a 2017 ICMA Community Heroes Award recipient is a testament to her dedication to building ethical, efficient, and effective local government. Her 2017-2020 role as a trustee on the U.S. Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council and current memberships in the Allegiant Stadium Community Advisory Board and LVMPD Multicultural Advisory Council further highlight her influence. She also played a crucial role in securing the All-America City Award for Las Vegas in 2018.

As a reform advocate, Dr. Morris Hibbler has played a pivotal role in addressing the overrepresentation of African American boys in the juvenile justice system. Her leadership in the Nevada State Juvenile Justice Commission and the Las Vegas My Brother's Keeper initiative to help improve academic outcomes for children of color and help eliminate the school-to-prison pipeline reflect her dedication to creating a fair and just system for all.

Her strategic leadership in education, such as with the Strong Start Las Vegas campaign and Innovations In Education committee, showcases her commitment to fostering a better future for children by increasing access to high-quality early childhood education and building a platform to ensure all children can reach their greatest potential in school and life.

Dr. Lisa Morris Hibbler is a champion of empowering youth and providing support and opportunities for those facing adversity. Her efforts are marked by a tireless commitment to service, a passion for justice, and a vision for a more equitable and inclusive society. Her impact extends far beyond her professional achievements, leaving an enduring legacy of positive change.



African American Trailblazer Service Awards

2015

Helen Anderson Toland- *Educator Award*
Harvey Munford- *Community Leader Award*
Randall Cunningham- *Sport Celebrity Award*
Ramon Savoy- *Economic Advancement- Business Award*
Dr. Robert Fowler- *Spiritual Community Award*
Bubba Knight- *Entertainer Award*

2016

Dr. Williams Sullivan- *Educator Award*
Patricia Cunningham- *Community Leader Award*
Richard Steele- *Sport Celebrity Award*
Tony Gladney- *Economic Advancement-Business Award*
Pastor Kelcey A. West- *Spiritual Community Award*
Diane Hughes-Pollard and Dr. Anthony L. Pollard- *Dynamic Duo Award*
Rosalind Brooks- *Emerging Leader Award*
Marcus Allen- *Emerging Leader Award*
Robert "Twix" Taylor- *Emerging Leader Award*

2017

Colin Seale- *Educator Award*
John Edmond- *Economic Advancement-Business Award*
Marvin Menzies- *Sport Celebrity Award*
Antanus Pullum- *Community Activism Award*
Dr. Ralph Williamson- *Spiritual Community Award*
Vicki Richardson and Lou Richardson- *Dynamic Duo Award*
Manny LaMarre- *Emerging Leader Award*
Commissioner William McCurdy II- *Emerging Leader Award*
Monica Jackson- *Media Award*

2018

Kim Russell- *Educator Award*
Kelvin Atkinson- *Business & Economic Advancement Award*
Ender Austin III- *Community Activism & Politics Award*
Pastor Bobby Smith- *Spiritual Community Award*
Detrick Sanford- *Emerging Leader Award*
Lillian McMorris- *Media Award*

African American Trailblazer Service Awards

2019

Audrey James- *Educator Award*
Andre Lorenzo Crockett Sr.- *Business & Economic Advancement Award*
Ken Young- *Community Activism & Politics Award*
Audrey Wesley- *Spiritual Community Award*
LJ Edmondson- *Emerging Leader Award*
Jo Cato- *Media Award*
KCEP-FM 88.1 Radio Station- *Trailblazer Impact Award*

2020

Dr. Esther Jones Langston- *Educator Award*
Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno- *Community Activism
& Politics Award*
Pastor Willie R. Cherry- *Spiritual Community Award*
Pierre Hudson- *Business & Economic Advancement Award*
Jeremy R. Washington- *Tyrone Thompson Emerging Leader Award*

2021

Dr. Zack Robbins- *Educator Award*
Sherri Lewis and Jerome Harry- *Business & Economic Advancement Award*
Leslie Turner- *Community Activism & Politics Award*
Pastor Bill McDonnell Jr. - *Spiritual Community Award*
Larmaya "Ce Ce" Kilgore- *Tyrone Thompson Emerging Leader Award*

2022

Dr. Linda Young- *Educator Award*
Kenya Young- *Business & Economic Advancement Award*
Roxann McCoy- *Community Activism & Politics Award*
China Hudson- *Spiritual Community Award*
Sean Tory- *Tyrone Thompson Emerging Leader Award*

2023

Q'shaundra James- *Educator Award*
Melvin Green- *Business & Economic Advancement Award*
Tameka Henry- *Community Activism & Politics Award*
Dr. Naida M. Parson- *Spiritual Community Award*
Vogue M. Robinson- *Tyrone Thompson Emerging Leader Award*



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