



# **Bonner Center for Civic Engagement**

---

**UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND**

---

## **Engage for Change Awards**

---

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2024**

QUEALLY CENTER FOR ADMISSION & CAREER SERVICES



## Award Print

This year's inspiring Engage for Change print was designed by Richmond artist Niyah McGee, alumni of ART 180's 2023 Atlas Artist Residency and 2024 resident artist of The Art Seen.

## Keynote Speaker

Artist and emcee, youth empowerment coach, and visionary leader of The Hive, Gina Lyles leverages her lived experience to champion justice transformation. She is from Richmond and has been a fierce youth advocate locally and nationally for almost a decade. Gina previously co-directed the national cultural organizing project Performing Statistics.

# Program

## WELCOME

Yamir Chapman, '25, and Beza Mulatu, '25  
Sylvia Gale, CCE Executive Director

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Gina Lyles  
Founder & Executive Director, The Hive

## SERVICE FOR CHANGE AWARDS

Presented by Mason Manley, '23, Central Virginia Organizer for the Chesapeake Climate Action Network

## COMMUNITY-ENGAGED TEACHING AWARDS

Presented by Kerstin Soderlund, Associate Dean for Student and External Affairs, Jepson School of Leadership Studies, and Jennifer Cavanaugh, Dean, School of Arts & Sciences

## COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Presented by Jennifer Cavanaugh, Dean, School of Arts & Sciences, and Jamelle Wilson, Dean, School of Professional & Continuing Studies

## CONTRIBUTION TO THE INSTITUTION AWARD

Presented by Jamelle Wilson, Dean, School of Professional & Continuing Studies

## BILL COLEMAN AWARD

Presented by David Salisbury, Chair, Department of Geography, Environment, & Sustainability

## COMMUNITY EDUCATOR AWARDS

Presented by Derek Miller, CCE Associate Director of Community-Engaged Research, Scholarship, and Relationships, and Kyle Redican, Director, Spatial Analysis Lab, and Kay Lina

## COLLABORATION FOR CHANGE AWARDS

Presented by Anthony Crenshaw, CCE Director of Operations, and Emilia Hodal, CCE Assistant Director for Student Engagement and the Bonner Scholars Program

# Honorees

## SERVICE FOR CHANGE AWARDS

*This award recognizes an individual or group who has committed to service and relationship building in the Richmond community as a significant part of his/her/their college experience and whose work has contributed to a community's goals.*

### **Nolan Richards, '25**

Nolan Richards is president of University of Richmond's chapter of Alpha Phi Omega (APO), the national service fraternity. Committed to developing strong relationships with the members of the community where he volunteers, he has connected with retirees at the Lakewood retirement community through dominoes and conversation. He has also strengthened APO's partnership with FRIENDS Association for Children, a nonprofit in Richmond dedicated to serving children, through fundraising and ongoing service. A leader in community engagement, Nolan has gone above and beyond the APO hours of service requirements.

### **Izzy Blaylock, '25**

Izzy Blaylock is the University of Richmond's Atlantic-10 Student Athlete Advisory Commission (SAAC) Representative who is spearheading an initiative aiming to register all eligible student athletes in the Conference to vote. She is also working to get student athletes involved in community-based electoral measures such as registering voters or working at polls. She has shown exceptional commitment to building meaningful relationships and making a positive impact. She is also the president of College Democrats, Service Chair of Omicron Delta Kappa, and a Senator for Westhampton College Government Association.

## COMMUNITY-ENGAGED TEACHING AWARDS

*This award recognizes a faculty member who has consistently demonstrated excellence in community-engaged teaching at the University of Richmond. Community-engaged teaching is undertaken in collaboration with community partners in order to further the learning of all involved and build the capacity of students and community members in order to effect positive change.*

### **Kristin Bezio**

**Professor of Leadership Studies and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs,  
Jepson School for Leadership Studies**

Kristin Bezio's Leadership on Stage & Screen course, which she has been teaching for over 10 years, connects students and community members in the production of a Shakespeare play. The Jepson Shakespeare Project is not only about creating a performance, but using the process as a way to discuss contemporary concerns about race, injustice, and the lack of equity in our schools, institutions, and justice system. The project helps to foster mutual respect and understanding between the participants, the Jepson students, and the community at large, and it impacts every student and community member in deepening their skills in leadership, reading, performance, and creativity. Over the years, community partners have included St. Joseph's Villa, Peter Paul, Higher Achievement, Youth Life, and Henrico Education Foundation.



**Colleen Carpenter-Swanson**  
**Assistant Professor of Biology**

Colleen Carpenter-Swanson is deeply committed to inclusive education and community engagement. Her Drugs and Genetics community-based learning students engage with middle school students from Higher Achievement, a nonprofit focused on closing the opportunity gap during the pivotal middle school years. Students share their zebrafish research through video content and a lab experience, thus expanding their own learning and leadership. Dr. Carpenter-Swanson was also instrumental in starting the Biology Belonging Committee and guiding it through its expansion into the larger Science Belonging Committee to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students in the sciences.

## COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

*This award recognizes a University faculty member whose scholarly and/or other creative activity emerges from a mutually beneficial partnership with a community and creates new knowledge that contributes to positive social change.*

**Stephanie Spera**  
**Assistant Professor of Geography, Environment, & Sustainability**

Stephanie Spera is deeply committed to community-engaged scholarship to impact change and student learning. She leads research focused on citizen science, actively incorporating community viewpoints and data into scientific decision-making. She has received major grants to bring geotechnology to developing countries to improve decision making and to support Virginia's local Indigenous tribes on environmental justice issues. She has expanded her Acadia National Park climate research to the Shenandoah and Great Smokey Mountain National Parks, and as part of the Richmond Cemetery Collaboratory, she has incorporated drone and satellite imagery to bring visibility to historic African American cemeteries in Richmond. This work builds on her long time research in the agricultural landscapes of the Brazilian cerrado where she continues to publish research that influences agricultural practices and policy decisions in South America.

**Tom Shields**  
**Associate Dean, School of Professional & Continuing Studies, and Associate Professor of Education and Leadership Studies, Jepson School of Leadership Studies**

Tom Shields increases knowledge and promotes critical discourse both within academia and the broader Richmond community. His research has focused on race, income, cultural separation, isolation, and segregation. "Confronting School and Housing Segregation in the Richmond Region: Can We Learn and Live Together?," a follow-up to his influential 2017 report, will be published this fall with colleagues from Virginia Commonwealth University, Partnership for Housing Affordability, HOME of Virginia, and The Commonwealth Institute. He also serves on the advisory team for the University of Richmond and Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' Unpacking the Census project which examines structural inequality through Census research and has mentored countless students in their own research.

## CONTRIBUTION TO THE INSTITUTION AWARD

*This award recognizes a faculty or staff member whose community-engaged teaching, scholarship, and/or service have made a significant contribution to the University of Richmond, furthering opportunities for faculty engagement, community collaboration, and the learning and thriving of our students.*

### **Rob McAdams** **Director, Partners in the Arts**

Rob McAdams is the director of Partners in the Arts, the Richmond region's premier resource for integrated learning and teaching in PK-12 classrooms, which he has boldly led for over a decade, shaping the arts education landscape and curriculum in the region. He has shared best teaching practices with countless educators, engaged local artists and talent, and enriched the learning of innumerable PK-12 students. Through this important work, Rob has advanced University of Richmond community relationships and the larger work of the School of Professional & Continuing Studies to be an exemplar of continuing education for working professionals and lifelong learners in the Richmond region and a top choice for those seeking transformative learning experiences.

## BILL COLEMAN AWARD

*Mr. William "Bill" Coleman was the shuttle driver for Spiders serving in the community from 2012-2021 and a beloved colleague whose spirit and dedication advanced student engagement at the University of Richmond. This award recognizes a member of the University's staff who is dedicated to supporting meaningful engagement with our local and global communities.*

### **Beth Zizzamia** **GIS Operations Manager, Spatial Analysis Lab**

Beth Zizzamia has been a crucial driver in advancing applied community-based research at the University of Richmond. She has worked closely with the Richmond Cemetery Collaboratory and classes exploring borderlands and heat islands in the region. She presents and is a co-author on high-impact papers, supports and provides presentations in the community, and creates web-based products that inspire new understandings of and solutions to social and environmental justice challenges. Beth is an indispensable part of the University's community-based research and teaching related to geospatial technologies and has deepened the learning of countless University of Richmond students.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATOR AWARDS

*This award honors an individual or organization in the Richmond community who has transformed students, faculty, and/or staff through the sharing of their knowledge and expertise.*

### **My Lan Tran** **Executive Director, Virginia Asian American Chamber of Commerce**

My Lan Tran has been the pillar of the Virginia Asian American Chamber of Commerce since 2011. A dynamic and important leader in the Virginia Asian community, she has been a longtime partner of the CCE's Civic Fellowship Program and actively supports our University of Richmond students with internships and career support. She has extensive background in international trade development and working with Asian businesses in many countries and serves as an important international business resource for the Robins School of Business.

**Janis Allen**  
**President, Historic Jackson Ward Association**

Janis Allen has engaged with the Spatial Analysis Lab and enriched student learning and undergraduate research on Richmond's historic Jackson Ward neighborhood, known as the Harlem of the South. She has facilitated hands-on training, guiding the students through the history of Jackson Ward, the data collection process, and arranging opportunities for them to meet influential neighborhood leaders. Committed to ensuring that the research has a lasting impact, she has created opportunities for students to present their findings at community events, including Maggie L. Walker's 160th Birthday Celebrations, and facilitated their participation in Jackson Ward Neighborhood Association meetings and the 2nd Street Summit hosted by the City of Richmond.

## **COLLABORATION FOR CHANGE AWARDS**

*This award honors a collaborative community-based partnership between campus and community stakeholders. This award is given to an individual or group who recognizes the importance of authentic relationships and genuine collaboration to affect change.*

### **SEEDS (Students Engaging & Enacting Dialogue on Service)**

The SEEDS Project is a diverse student-led organization dedicated to exploring the complexities of American society through service, dialogue, and reflection. Since 2006, SEEDS has provided immersive alternative spring break trips for students eager to participate in service projects, connect with community members, and delve into pressing social and environmental justice issues at both local and national levels.

### **Scholars Latino Initiative**

Scholars Latino Initiative (SLI) is a mentorship program that pairs Latinx high-school students with college-aged mentors who help prepare them for college. The University of Richmond chapter was started by leadership studies professor Peter Kaufman who still serves as the program's faculty advisor. Students meet at events throughout the year and address a variety of topics, including the college application process. SLI enhances college access and centers partnership both between the student and mentor and between the local chapter and its larger organization.

*The Bonner Center for Civic Engagement is grateful to all of tonight's presenters, University Catering, Events and Support Services, WCDE 90.1, and the Book Arts Studio for helping to make the 2024 Engage for Change Awards so special.*



**Bonner Center for  
Civic Engagement**