

Engage for Change Awards

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

QUEALLY CENTER FOR ADMISSION & CAREER SERVICES
UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND



**Bonner Center for
Civic Engagement**

Program

WELCOME

Natali Sabri, '26, Bonner Scholar

OPENING REMARKS

Joan Saab, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED TEACHING AND SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Presented by Jennifer Cavanaugh, Dean, School of Arts & Sciences

ATTUNEMENT FRAMEWORK LAUNCH

Sylvia Gale, Executive Director, Bonner Center for Civic Engagement

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Taylor Scott, Founder, RVA Community Fridges

SERVICE FOR CHANGE AWARDS

Presented by Emilia Hodal, Assistant Director of Student Engagement and Bonner Scholars Program, Bonner Center for Civic Engagement

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED TEACHING AWARD

Presented by Tom Shields, Associate Professor, Jepson School of Leadership Studies

CONTRIBUTION TO THE INSTITUTION AWARD

Presented by Wendy Perdue, Dean, School of Law

COMMUNITY EDUCATOR AND ADVOCACY FOR CHANGE AWARDS

Presented by Amy Howard, Associate Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Community Engagement

COLLABORATION FOR CHANGE AWARD

Presented by Tricia Stohr-Hunt, Chair, Department of Education

BILL COLEMAN, CIVIC COMMITMENT, AND PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Presented by Sylvia Gale

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.

Dhruvam Desai, '26

Dhruvam Desai is a Bonner Scholar who commits up to 10 hours each week to community engagement throughout the academic year. For three years, he has served with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program, a partnership between the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg, the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement, and the Robins School of Business, offering free tax preparation for families and individuals with income of \$67,000 or less. He also enthusiastically supports other students in their engagement. In the words of a nominator, "Through and through, he goes above and beyond to make sure that the students find a way to be involved."

Lauren Shin, '27, and Cam Tyson, '27

Lauren Shin and Cam Tyson are the founders of the Kickin' It Coalition, a University of Richmond club dedicated to hosting free 1:1 soccer clinics for children ages 5-14 with autism in the greater Richmond area. Last year, the Kickin' It Coalition hosted 16 clinics, and children were paired with the same coaches to foster strong relationships. As a nominator shared, "It's a great example of creating a campus culture that is more welcoming, inclusive, and open to all."

Kalkidan T. Lina, '26

Kay Lina has dedicated two years to community-engaged research in Richmond's historic Jackson Ward. She has interviewed over 140 Jackson Ward residents about their perceptual boundaries of the neighborhood, created maps for and shared careful analysis with residents, and led a comprehensive heat assessment project which has resulted in new planned trees with community-driven plaques. A nominator wrote, "Kay has shown that meaningful scholarship emerges not from studying communities from the outside, but from building authentic relationships and working alongside residents toward their own articulated goals for positive change."

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.

Michelle Lynn Kahn
Associate Professor of History

Michelle Kahn is a scholar of the global and transnational history of Germany after 1945 and author of *Foreign in Two Homelands: Racism, Return Migration, and Turkish-German History*. The community-based learning components of her Sophomore Scholars in Residence, Remembering the Holocaust in Modern-Day Germany, were transformative for her students. In collaboration with the Virginia Holocaust Museum, her students planned and facilitated an all-day workshop for K-12 teachers in our region and beyond. As nominators shared, “Getting to interact with these teachers was an unforgettable experience,” and “Dr. Kahn is an exemplary professor whose dedication to making a positive impact on the community is truly inspiring.”

Julian Hayter
Professor of Leadership Studies

A historian whose research focuses on modern U.S. history, American political development, African-American history, and the American civil rights movement, Julian Hayter is an exemplar of community-engaged teaching. He is co-author of *The Making of Twenty-First-Century Richmond: Politics, Policy, and Governance, 1988-2016* and the author of *The Dream Is Lost: Voting Rights and the Politics of Race in Richmond, Virginia*. With community-based learning classes, such as Justice and Civil Society and Reimagining Richmond, he integrates service learning and powerful study trips to deepen student learning. As a nominator shared, “Students (and parents) frequently report that he ‘changed’ their lives for the better, making them aware of historical contexts for present challenges, and helping them understand the need for positive change.”

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.

Kyle Redican
Director of the Spatial Analysis Lab

Kyle Redican’s expertise lies in applying GIS technologies and spatial statistics to address important geography questions. His research focuses on the mitigation and assessment of uncertainty in U.S. Census Data, urban sustainability and justice, utility regulation, and AI in geography education. From his work with the Jackson Ward Neighborhood Association to Unpacking the Census, a partnership between Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities and the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement, School of Professional & Continuing Studies, and Spatial Analysis Lab, which examines structural inequity through census research, Dr. Redican’s scholarship sits at the intersection of history, geography, community, and justice. In the words of a nominator, “Dr. Redican has kept the community at the forefront of his research.”

Sandy Williams
Assistant Professor of Art

Sandy Williams IV is an artist and educator whose work investigates concepts of time and explores historical landscapes, colloquial records, national mythologies, and the circulation of pop culture. From their project on Richmond's Chimborazo Park which led to a new historical marker to their memorial to enslaved workers at Roanoke College, their scholarship and art are rooted in community. As a nominator shared about their collaborative work to tell the story of Chimborazo Park's early Freedman's Village, "This type of project shows the deep engagement of the public through the creative process and the ways that academic creative work can have public impact."

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.

University of Richmond School of Law's In-House Clinics

Richmond Law operates four in-house clinics – the Jeanette Lipman Children's Defense Clinic under the supervision of Professor Julie McConnell; the Institute for Actual Innocence under the supervision of Professor Mary Kelly Tate; the Intellectual Property and Transactional Law Clinic under the supervision of Professor Ashley R. Dobbs; and the Access to Justice Clinic under the supervision of Professor Cassie Powell. These clinics provide free legal service to members of our community who are unable to afford the assistance they need. The clinics literally transform the lives of the clients they serve, as well as the lives of our students who have the opportunity to work on real legal matters under the mentorship of our exceptional faculty. And their work strengthens the Richmond community by helping to bridge the justice gap for marginalized individuals and families, entrepreneurs, and non-profits in our region. As a nominator shared, "Clinical legal education provides a unique and meaningful opportunity for law students to practice their legal advocacy under the watchful eye of seasoned public interest lawyers. This program is a shining example of the benefits of community-based learning. We are all the better for their efforts."

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.

Tanya Gonzalez
Executive Director, Sacred Heart Center

As executive director of Sacred Heart Center, a Richmond organization which connects Latino families with tools to thrive and flourish, Tanya Gonzalez has guided and inspired University of Richmond students in a multitude of ways. She has served as a Civic Fellow mentor and supervisor to students engaging at Sacred Heart Center, presented numerous times at the University of Richmond for classes and events such as the Connecting Womxn of Color Conference, and been an inspiring leader in Richmond. Her dedication to empowering marginalized communities has made a deep impact on our region and has been a model for countless future leaders and change makers.

ADVOCACY FOR CHANGE AWARDS

This award recognizes an individual or group who has consistently advocated for meaningful action towards social justice in the Richmond region. Awardees have worked persistently to understand the larger context of a social problem and are strategic and intentional in their actions to promote change.

Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP) works to to engage people of faith and goodwill to advocate for economic, racial, and social justice in Virginia's policies and practices through education, prayer, and action. They have engaged Virginians and college students from the University of Richmond and across the Commonwealth in their advocacy work. As a student shared at last year's VICPP Day of Action, "It is common for youth to feel a sense of helplessness politically, and many students want to get more engaged but need some guidance on where to start. The VICPP Student Day of Action is a great place for students to begin taking those first steps toward political advocacy."

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.

Allison Brenning, Director of Special Education and Elementary Instruction, UR
Tammy Milby, Director of Reading Instruction, UR
Jehan Gabrual, Associate Principal, Dumbarton Elementary School
Lowell Thomas, Program Director, Henrico Police Athletic League

The longtime collaboration between the University of Richmond, Dumbarton Elementary School, and Henrico Police Athletic League (HPAL) has helped elementary students in our local schools in need of additional support. Dr. Brenning and Dr. Milby lead community-engaged classes that offer tutoring support to struggling students who have been identified by the school and HPAL representatives. As a nominator shared, "The work undertaken in these clinic courses has a lasting impact on the children, their families, and schools, as well as the UR students learning through their work with them."

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.

Janae Driver
Associate Director, Employer Relations

Since joining the University of Richmond in 2021, Janae Driver has supported organizations across Richmond in connecting with student interns and future employees. As a nominator shared, “She always reaches out to managers, gets to know them and their Human Resources needs, and assists them with developing postings.” Her thoughtful and dedicated approach meaningfully contributes important relationships across our region and the success of our students in their careers and in life.

CIVIC COMMITMENT AWARD

Civic commitment is defined as developing one's commitment to and effectiveness in participation in public processes. This award honors an individual who demonstrates civic commitment and inspires it in other learners, enhancing their positive impact on the world around them.

Courtney Hughes
Assistant Athletics Director for Academic Support and Civic Engagement

Courtney Hughes has activated students' civic learning and commitment on so many occasions in her eighteen years at the University of Richmond. She has guided student-athletes on Civil Rights Trail Tours, immersing them in the legacies of Atlanta, Selma, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Tuskegee, and cultivated global experiences to South Africa, UAE, Cuba, Greece, and Costa Rica that have expanded student horizons. Dr. Hughes also serves as the director of the Bridge to Success Program where she collaborates with the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement to design community-based learning experiences for UR's newest Spiders. For the last seven years, Dr. Hughes has also taken students to the Black Student-Athlete Summit, ensuring that they have spaces to network, grow, and raise their voices as leaders. As a nominator shared, “She helps students see the common threads between movements for justice at home and abroad, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of their role as global citizens.”

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

This award honors an individual for their scholarly or other creative activity that serves a public good extending beyond the academic purpose of the work. Public scholarship encompasses different forms of making knowledge about, for, and with diverse publics and communities.

Rob Nelson
Director, Digital Scholarship Lab

Rob Nelson's work leading the Digital Scholarship Lab has produced phenomenal examples of public scholarship. He is the editor of American Panorama: An Atlas of United States History, an historical atlas of the United States for the twenty-first century. It combines cutting-edge research with innovative interactive mapping techniques. The Atlas includes "Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America" that features 300 redlining maps that explicitly endorsed and advanced racial discrimination in housing and real estate and created lasting effect on our communities. His important work has reached millions of students, scholars, journalists, and advocates.



2025 Award Print by Alfonso Pérez Acosta

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 2025 Engage for Change Awards so special.