



THE AFRICA-AMERICA INSTITUTE'S
70TH ANNIVERSARY

GALA

— *Connecting Global Africa*

TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Celebrating 70 years of enriching the social fabric of humanity by connecting students and leaders across sectors, facilitating access to reliable information about Africa, and transforming the way we understand Africa and its worldwide diaspora.

Tuesday
Sept. 19th

2023

Cipriani
42nd St.

NYC

it's only human to celebrate those who make a difference

It's the basis behind what we do every day. We're proud to celebrate the hard work, commitment, and skill of those helping to make the world a better place.

Chevron is proud to sponsor the Africa-America institute's 70th Anniversary Gala. Congratulations to all of tonight's distinguished awardees!





WELCOME LETTER



PRESIDENT



CHAIR OF THE BOARD

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and Staff of the Africa-America Institute (AAI), it is our pleasure to welcome you to AAI's 70th Anniversary Gala, a special edition of our Annual Awards Gala.

This evening we celebrate seven decades of AAI's continued efforts to enrich the social fabric of humanity by connecting students and leaders across sectors, facilitating access to reliable information about Africa, and transforming the way we understand Africa and its worldwide diaspora.

Africans joining hands with the worldwide diaspora, and all those invested in the advancement and empowerment of the Continent, is the catalyst for transforming the relationship of Global Africa to humanity.

And it is your support that allows us to continue this vital work. We are honored to be on this journey with you and look forward to a night of celebration.

Yours in Partnership,

Kofi Appenteng
President
The Africa-America Institute

Christal M. Jackson
Chair of the Board of Trustees
The Africa-America Institute



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ABOUT AAI

Launched in 1953, The Africa America Institute strives to enrich the social fabric of humanity by connecting students and leaders across sectors, facilitating access to reliable information about Africa, and transforming the way we understand Africa and its worldwide diaspora.

Since its founding, AAI has played a role on the global stage, as a convener bringing together the US, Africa and the worldwide African diaspora. Beyond its initiatives in education and academia, AAI serves as a facilitator for governments, enterprises, trade associations, philanthropic organizations, cultural institutions and more, broadening the paradigm for connection.

Among our principal co-founders were Horace Mann Bond and William Leo Hansberry, two pioneering and visionary African-American scholar-activists whose work bridged the divide between African and African-diaspora academic studies.

AAI continues to steward the founding vision and embrace the philosophy of education for liberation that Bond and Hansberry espoused through a variety of educational and cultural programs that affirm humanity and cultivate the collective aspirations and excellence of all people.

AAI has awarded scholarships and fellowships to over 23,000 Africans. These individuals comprise an esteemed network of alumni, many of whom are leaders and influencers across public, private, and governmental sectors across Africa and globally.

Included in this network are current Heads of State, H.E. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia; H.E. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire; and H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa. Many of AAI's Alumni have left an indelible imprint, including the late 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Mathai and the late Barack Obama, Sr.

Learn more at aaionline.org and follow AAI on social media:



[@aaiafrica](https://www.instagram.com/aaiafrica) [#AAIGala2023](https://twitter.com/AAIGala2023) [#AAIAfrica](https://www.facebook.com/AAIAfrica)

IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING HER EXCELLENCY HASSANA ALIDOU

MARCH 29, 1963 – JUNE 10, 2023



Last June, the Republic of Niger, the United States, and the world lost an exemplary mother, sister, diplomat, author, humanitarian, professor, and scholar with the passing of Her Excellency Hassana Alidou.

Ambassador Alidou, who served as Niger's Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the United States and Canada, was a long-time supporter and adviser to AAI. Working alongside her twin sister, Professor Ousseina D. Alidou, an Africanist scholar on Muslim women in the Department of African, Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies at Rutgers University, AAI benefited greatly from the collective, and individual intellectual capacities, of these super star daughters who came from humble beginnings in Niamey, Niger.

In the late 1980s, both Ambassador Alidou and Professor Alidou came to the United States with the support of AAI scholarships to pursue their education. Ambassador Alidou attended the University of Illinois and earned her PhD under AAI's African Graduate Fellowship (AFGRAD) Program. She, along with Professor Alidou, served as a key member of the AAI family, leveraging her expertise and influence to further the organization's mission of strengthening educational opportunities for Africans.

Wherever she went, Ambassador Alidou, also a renowned scholar and author, left a lasting impression, including, but not limited to, holding senior level positions at The World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Ambassador Alidou worked tirelessly to address gender disparities in access to education and to dismantle barriers that hindered the educational advancement of girls. Thanks to her tireless efforts, today countless young women across the continent, as well as here in the United States, are empowered with college and graduate degrees.

May she continue to Rest In Peace.

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GALA MESSAGES

AFRICAN UNION		UNION AFRICAINE
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AFRICAN UNION MISSION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA		

Mr. Kofi Appenteng
President
The Africa-America Institute
60 East 42nd Street, Suite 1700
New York, New York 10165

August 29, 2023

Dear Mr. Appenteng:

On behalf of the African Union, I am pleased to offer my heartfelt congratulations to the Africa-America Institute (AAI) on your 70th Anniversary.

During my tenure as the African Union Ambassador to the United States, I have become familiar with the work of AAI. For seven decades, you have been at the forefront of promoting engagement in education, training, and dialogue between the United States. Also, and equally impressive is your track record of 23,000 African Alums who, thanks to AAI, received scholarships and fellowships to pursue their academic dreams in the United States. Because of AAI, they returned home armed with the academic credentials necessary to become contributing members of African society in government, academic, business, and diplomacy, to name just a few fields.

Congratulations again to AAI for 70 years of filling a much-needed void on the educational front with the continent of Africa. The work of AAI must continue.

Sincerely,



Ambassador Hilda Suka-Mafudze
AU Permanent Representative to the United States





GALA MESSAGES



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

September 19, 2023

Dear Friends:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome everyone to the 70th anniversary awards gala of the Africa-America Institute (AAI).

New York is immensely proud of its reputation as an advocate and strong defender not only for those who live here, but for people across the globe, including our African friends and neighbors. Since its founding in 1953, the AAI has served as a bridge between this incredible continent and our great city, as well as a pillar of support and solidarity among our own African American community. Over the years, it has provided more than 23,000 scholarships and fellowships to help the next generation gain leadership skills; expertise in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); and more.

This group has brought together the foremost advisors, diplomats, professors, and thought leaders from throughout the African Diplomatic Orientation and Engagement Program and the Annual State of Education on Africa Conference in an effort to serve as a catalyst for greater access, accountability, and action in Africa. The AAI has also pushed for a more comprehensive and inclusive program of study here in our city and nation. By developing a curriculum that focuses on Black history and the Black experience, it has encouraged students to explore their identities and internalize the values of inclusivity and multiculturalism that define our great melting pot. On the occasion of its awards gala, I am pleased to recognize the AAI for its efforts to bolster our education system and build a better, brighter future for all.

On behalf of the City of New York, please accept my best wishes for a productive and promising event.

Sincerely,

Eric Adams
Mayor

September 19, 2023

Mr. Kofi Appenteng
President
The Africa-America Institute
60 East 42nd Street, Suite 1700
New York, New York 10165



Dear Mr. Appenteng:

I am pleased to salute the Africa-America Institute (AAI) on 70 years of outstanding service to Africa and the United States.

In 1974, I went to Africa for the first time as a Member of Congress. Traveling to a World Bank meeting in Kenya with George Shultz, who served as Secretary of Treasury during the Ford Administration, we saw a view of Africa that had not been previously imagined. As faith would have it, between June and December 1974, I returned for a series of visits, first to visit AAI, and then to visit South Africa with Arthur Ashe for a tennis match.

So, I have been a friend of AAI for one year shy of fifty years!

Indeed, when I was sworn in as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in 1977, President Jimmy Carter gave me a handwritten note that simply said: "I want you to go to Africa immediately and ask as many African leaders as possible what they expect of this Administration."

During my tenure at the United Nations, and since, I can proudly say that AAI is an organization I have worked closely with to get a pulse of, in particular, the educational needs confronting the African continent.

Congratulations to AAI on your 70th Anniversary. Please know that I stand remain ready to support AAI as you deem appropriate.

Peace and Blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Andrew J. Young'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A'.

ANDREW J. YOUNG, Chairman



1950'S : AAI'S ORIGINS



The Africa-America Institute (AAI) was founded in Washington, D.C. in 1953, after a small, yet committed group of American leaders sought to form an organization to support African students in pursuing higher education in the United States. At that time, highly motivated African students attending U.S. universities arrived in the country full of hope and promise, but often with limited resources to finance their undergraduate and graduate degrees.



Dr. Horace Mann Bond, former president of Pennsylvania's Lincoln University and Leo Hansberry, professor of History at Howard University, joined by Henrietta Van Noy of American University, and William Steen, an African affairs expert, established the Institute of African-American Relations, today known as The Africa-America Institute, to provide scholarship assistance to African students in the U.S. and to nurture future leadership on the continent.

Founded when a majority of African nations were under colonial rule, AAI's assistance filled a great need by building African leadership and assisting Africans in gaining a world-class education and skills that could be applied in post-colonial Africa.



AAI President William R. Cotter, center, meets with two Liberian artists in Monrovia. At Mr. Cotter's left is Mrs. Cletta David-Mensah, a painter. At right, Mr. R. Van Richards, a wood sculptor. Both artists attended universities in the United States.

1953 AAI was founded as the Institute of African-American Relations (IAAR)



1956 AAI launches the Africa Report

1957 Africa House opened in Washington, D.C.

AAI opens its first Regional Office in Accra, Ghana

1958 Name changed to the African-American Institute and moves HQ to New York



ETA participant interviews superintendent of private school in the suburbs of Ibadan, Nigeria.

An American educator examines goods produced by the people of Asebu, a village in Ghana.

1959 Barack Hussein Obama Sr.'s graduate studies start at the University of Hawaii facilitated by AAI

1960'S-1970'S : TIME OF REMARKABLE CHANGE

With the onset of African independence, AAI began pioneering new programs to offer advanced education opportunities and specialized training to a greater number of Africans, equipping them with the skills to contribute to the development of newly independent countries.

By 1963, AAI was interviewing hundreds of students in Africa for USAID-funded scholarships in the United States. The organization's portfolio was also broadened to administer training programs for African students in African nations.

Despite rapid decolonization, by the mid-1960s the United States' interest and international assistance to Africa was on a downward slope. In response, in 1968 AAI organized the African-American Dialogues, a series of annual conferences with leading African and American leaders of government and the private sector, to fuel greater interest in Africa through discussions on top issues of concern to Africa and the United States.

The 1970s ushered in remarkable changes on the African continent and at The Africa-America Institute. By and large, a majority of African countries were free from colonial rule by this time and moving towards building strong, stable independent nations. Yet, much of southern Africa was the final holdout in achieving independence on the continent.



AAI Executive Vice President Walter C. Carrington, second from left, is interviewed by AAI by Vice President Frank H. Evans and Executive Vice President Walter C. Carrington at Leasho. AAI's interview on State, sponsored by AAI, was shown nationwide on ABC's "Special Morning America."



School Services Director Evelyn Jones Rich working with teachers at recent AAI workshop. School Services aims to foster more and better teaching about Africa.



AAI Executive Vice President Walter C. Carrington appeared before the U.S. Special Committee Against Apartheid on February 23 at a session held by the Committee to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of W.E.B. DuBois.



Several steps to implement these recommendations have already been taken: Staff have identified a significant number of African women to be considered for U.S. visits under the African Travel Program. They have also identified...

Trainees from South Africa and Zimbabwe attending the National University of Lesotho under an AAI program are shown with the University's foreign student counselor, second from left, and AAI program representative, Seleke Makose, far right.



Nine corporate and banking executives participated in The African American Conference in Lesotho. Pictured here, second row, are Robert M. Hoare, Vice President, Africa Area, The Chase Manhattan Bank; Harold R. Hochschild, former Chairman of American Metal Chem. Inc.; and Milton J. Hill, President, Gulf Energy and Minerals Company International. Other Americans pictured are Clarence D. Coleman, Deputy Executive Director for Field Operations of the National Urban League, Inc.; James Lee, David E. Hawk, Director, Commonwealth Program, Carnegie Corporation of New York; second row far left, Dorothy I. Hoyle, President, National Council of Negro Women.

- 1960 African Scholarship Program of American Universities (ASPAU) established
- 1961 President John F. Kennedy signed into law the Foreign Aid Assistance Act, establishing the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- AAI International Visitors Program (IVP) is established
- 1962 AAI establishes the South Africa Students Program (SASP)
- 1963 African Graduate Fellowships Program (AFGRAD) established
- 1967 African Universities Scholarship Program (INTERAF) established
- 1968 AAI organized the first Annual African-American Dialogues in Kenya
- 1969 With the support of Carnegie Corporation, AAI launched the School Services Program
- 1971 AAI launches the Southern African Training Program (SATP)
- 1976 AAI convenes the 7th African-American Dialogue in Maseru, Lesotho confronting apartheid South Africa, colonialism and development assistance
- AAI's Southern African Training Program launched



HISTORY OF AAI

1980'S-1990'S : THE CALL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



Three of the honorees at AAI's Fifth Annual Awards Dinner are shown holding Star Crystal awards made by Steven Glass: Graca Simbine Machel, left, David Rockefeller, third from left, and Matilda Cuomo, second from right. With them were pictured, from left, Dr. Peggy Dulans, H. Carl McCall, and Frank Ferrari.



Nelson and Winnie Mandela of the United Nations with H.E. Prof. Ibrahim A. Gambia, Nigerian Ambassador to the United Nations and New York Mayor David Dinkins.



The Women's Africa Committee requested a visit to the United States to meet with African families in the US community.



The Institute's congressional activities program arranged some appointments for Archbishop Desmond Tutu, left, the Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, during his visit to Washington. Pictured with him were, from left, Frank Ferrari, acting president of the African-American Institute; Representative Howard Wolpe (D-Michigan), chairman of the House subcommittee on Africa; and Representative Mickey Leland (D-Texas), chairman of the House Select Committee on Hunger.



Participants in the "Women in Economic and Community Development Project" upon arrival in Washington, D.C.



Throughout the 1980's and 1990's AAI continued to act as a catalyst for thought, exposure, and experience for both Americans and Africans – challenging conventional American thought and policy about Africa through our congressional liaison, education and training programs, and many conferences. With a focus on democracy, the early 1990's saw many African nations becoming multiparty democracies, Nelson Mandela was released from prison and Namibia achieved independence. With representatives across Africa and as an extension of its Congressional Program, AAI began organizing election watches, including in Nigeria, Liberia, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

As African nations struggled to gain their footing amidst serious political and economic challenges, AAI continued to provide support through its educational programs and in 1990 launched the Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills Project (ATLAS). Designed to improve the ability of African institutions and organizations to plan and promote sustainable development, the ATLAS program also provided opportunities for graduates to continue their development upon returning to the continent.

At the close of the century, President Bill Clinton's historic trip to Africa and the coining of the phrase "trade not aid" were evidence of a shift in US policies towards Africa. AAI facilitated the introduction of African voices to the debate that resulted in the passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

- 1983** AAI hosts its 13th African-American Dialogues in Harare, Zimbabwe which provided a far reaching platform to critique the US "constructive engagement" policy toward apartheid South Africa
- Congressional Affairs Program launched
- 1984** AAI hosts its first Annual Awards Gala in New York City
- 1989** Vivian Lowery Derryck, former US State Department official appointed first African-American and female President of AAI
- 1990** Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills Project (ATLAS) Launched
- 1992** Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai and Hon. Nelson Mandela Honored at AAI's 9th Annual Awards Dinner
- 1994** Apartheid ends in South Africa and Nelson Mandela is elected President
- 1995** Mora McLean, former Ford Foundation representative for West Africa and Deputy Director of Africa and Middle East Programs, appointed AAI President
- 1997** AAI launches Africa Thursday Congressional Seminar Series
- Name changed to the Africa-America Institute
- 1999** Namibia Government Scholarship and Training Program (NGSTP) established at the request of the Namibian government, represented by AAI alumnus, Nahas Gideon Angula

2000'S-PRESENT : CONTINUING THE LEGACY



Pictured at AAI's 16th Annual Awards Dinner, Celebrate Africa in America, from left, AAI President Mira McLain, the Republic of South Africa's Ambassador to the United States Sheila Sisulu, Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, and Nigerian author Chinua Achebe.



AAI alumni and fellow alumni participants at the Management and Training Development Institute, San Diego, California.



International Fellowship Program for South Africa, 2004 and 2005 scholarship recipients



In the early 2000s, AAI offered a high-level platform for increased engagement with policymakers, academics, and key business and thought leaders from the United States and Africa. These discussions addressed issues relevant to Africa through African Perspectives roundtables, and the Africa Thursday Congressional Seminar Series.

In 2004, a report produced by the U.S. Agency for International Development concluded, "USAID's multi-million-dollar investment in long-term training programs managed by AAI for over 40 years produced significant and sustained changes that furthered African development in measurable ways."

- 2001** — AAI records more than 20,000 alumni worldwide
- 2002** — African Technology for Education and Workforce Development (AFTECH) launched
- 2007** — AAI launches Transformational Leadership Program (TLP) in partnership with the Coca Cola Foundation, the University of Pennsylvania and US International University in Kenya
- 2012** — AAI appoints Amini Kajunju as its first African-born President & CEO

AAI honors Africa's two female Heads of State - President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and President Joyce Banda at 28th Annual Awards Dinner
- 2014** — AAI hosts the inaugural State of Education Conference at the Ford Foundation in NYC
- 2015** — In partnership with the East Africa Development Bank and Rutgers University, AAI launches the EADB Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) Graduate Scholarship Program
- 2017** — AAI launches the Alumni Outreach Initiative

In partnership with the Jim Ovia Foundation, AAI announces the Jim Ovia Foundation Leaders Scholarship
- 2020** — AAI relaunches its School Services Program, beginning with pilots across Southeast MI
- 2021** — AAI hosts first virtual State of Education on Africa Conference
- 2022** — AAI joins the Global Circle on Reparations & Racial Healing which has its inaugural Summit in Accra, Ghana
- 2023** — AAI develops the School Services Webinar Series on Early and Medieval West Africa

To this day, AAI continues to embrace the philosophy of education for liberation that Bond and Hansberry espoused through a variety of educational programs that affirm humanity and cultivate the intellectual aspirations and excellence of all people.



TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Reception

In Memoriam

Welcome Remarks

Kofi Appenteng, *AAI President*
Hon. Eric Adams, *Mayor, The City of New York*

Poetry Reading

Donovan Beck, *Storyteller & Narrative Architect at the Legatum Center for
Development and Entrepreneurship at MIT*

AWARD CEREMONY

Legacy of Teaching Africa & Excellence Award

Dr. Evelyn (Evie) Jones Rich
Activist, Scholar, Educator & Author

Philanthropic Impact Award

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Accepted by President & CEO, Peter Laugharn

Business Leadership Award

Debra Lee
BET CEO Emeritus, Author and Founder of Leading Women Defined

Corporate Responsibility Award

MTN Group
Accepted by Group President and CEO, Ralph Mupita

PRESIDENTIAL FIRESIDE

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H.E. Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, *President of the Republic of Botswana*
H.E. Prof. Benedict Oramah, *President and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Afreximbank*

Moderator: Jennifer Zabasajja, *Correspondent & Anchor, Bloomberg TV and Quicktake*

Music

Alicia Olatuju
Critically Acclaimed Jazz and Gospel Vocalist, Composer, and Teacher

Closing Remarks

Christal M. Jackson
Chair, AAI Board of Trustees



HOSTED BY

Bozoma Saint John

*Hall of Fame Inducted Marketing Executive,
Author, and Entrepreneur*

Bozoma Saint John is a Hall of Fame Inducted Marketing Executive, Author, and Entrepreneur who is worthy of the Harvard Business School case study written about her career, titled “Leading with Authenticity and Urgency.” On February 21, 2023, Viking Books (an imprint of Penguin/Random House) published her memoir, “The Urgent Life.”

Her brilliant career has spanned various industries and includes roles as the Global CMO of Netflix, CMO of Endeavor, CBO of Uber, Head of Marketing of Apple Music & iTunes and Head of Music and Entertainment Marketing at PepsiCo.

Bozoma’s work has been lauded and awarded with notable recognition including (but not limited to) induction into the American Advertising Federation Hall of Achievement (2014), induction into Billboard’s Women in Music Hall of Fame (2018), induction into the Marketing Hall of Fame (2022); and has been included in Fast Company’s Most Creative People (2013), The Hollywood Reporter’s Women in Entertainment Power 100 list (2018) and crowned as The World’s Most Influential CMO by Forbes (2021). Her memoir, *The Urgent Life* was published February 21st, 2023, while her successful online tutorials “The Badass Workshop” teach others to be their greatest selves. But by far her greatest achievement is in raising her 13 year old daughter, Lael.



FEATURING

PERFORMANCE BY



Alicia Olatuja

*Critically Acclaimed Jazz & Gospel Vocalist,
Composer, and Teacher*

Praised by the New York Times as “a singer with a strong and luscious tone and an amiably regal presence on stage”, Alicia Olatuja has been astounding audiences with her exquisite vocals, artistic versatility and captivating demeanor. She first came into the national spotlight in 2013, whilst performing as the featured soloist with the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir at President Barack Obama’s Second Inauguration. Shortly thereafter, she assembled her own jazz based ensemble and recorded her first solo album, *Timeless* (2014).

Originally from St. Louis, MO, Alicia grew up immersed in a wide range of musical styles, including gospel, soul, jazz and classical. These influences have informed her artistic journey, and she later graduated with a Masters degree in Classical Voice/Opera from the Manhattan School of Music. After appearing in numerous operatic and musical theater productions, she started to perform more regularly in gospel and jazz concerts and worked with such esteemed artists as Chaka Khan, BeBe Winans and Christian McBride. In 2014, Alicia came to the attention of the acclaimed composer/arranger/pianist Billy Childs, and was brought on to be part of the touring incarnation of “Map to the Treasure: Reimagining Laura Nyro” alongside vocalist Becca Stevens. The project has begun an extensive nationwide tour for the 2015-16 season in cities including Chicago, Los Angeles, Austin, Denver, Tallahassee, New York, and Boston.

Her voice has also entranced the legendary Hammond B3 organist Dr. Lonnie Smith, and she has recently performed with him at multiple events including the Charlie Parker Festival and the BRIC JazzFest. Alicia’s own band, over the past year, has been steadily in demand, and they have performed at the Jazz Standard, Vermont Jazz Center, Sioux Falls JazzFest, Rockport Jazz Festival, Markham Jazz Festival, Monty Alexander Jazz Fest, and the Harlem Stage Gatehouse, to name a few.

POETRY READING BY



Donovan Beck

*Storyteller & Narrative Architect, Legatum Center
for Development and Entrepreneurship at MIT*

Donovan Beck is a celebrated storyteller with deep roots in filmmaking and digital creation. While he’s reshaped discussions on mental health and creativity online, drawing a community of over half a million across platforms like TikTok and Instagram, his career took a significant turn at the Legatum Center at MIT. As their Communications & Storytelling Specialist, Donovan has channeled his storytelling prowess into championing growth markets and fostering global entrepreneurship.

The success of his viral poem, “A Friendly Reminder,” and his self-published collection, “A Fool’s Guide to the Universe,” have been instrumental in his outreach. Donovan has championed mental health awareness and has collaborated with major organizations, including The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and The JED Foundation. Honored by Meta’s WeTheCulture in 2022, he’s reshaping perceptions of poetic narratives among communities of color and youth. Now, at the Legatum Center, he combines his passion for art, narrative, and entrepreneurship, aiming to democratize these realms on a global scale.



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WE FIND. TO DEVELOP **WE FUND. TO SCALE** **WE SUPPORT. TO GROW**

USADF strategically invests in African innovators and their solutions to tackle critical challenges including food insecurity, limited energy access, and unemployment.

These efforts are particularly directed towards empowering women and youth, creating pathways to prosperity for marginalized communities across the continent.





AWARD RECIPIENT

Dr. Evelyn (Evie) Jones Rich

Activist, Scholar, Educator, and Author

Dr. Evelyn Jones Rich has devoted a lifetime to advocacy and activism in the fight for right and justice against those who would deny it to others based on age, race, religion, gender, national origin, and sexual preference. An alumna of Bryn Mawr College, she holds a BA in Political Science, an MA in Social Studies from Hunter College (CUNY), and a PhD in African History and Education from Columbia University.

In 1950, Rich entered Bryn Mawr as its first Black residential student and became active in student government. As a member of Students for Democratic Action organization she represented the U.S. at international youth conferences and met young people from Africa and Asia, many of whom went on to play leading roles in newly independent nations and liberation movements during the 1960s.

As Director of the African American Institute's School Services Program in the 1970s Rich drew on her African contacts to pursue pioneering initiatives to infuse Africa into schools curricula. She has been a New York public school teacher and principal as well as (Associate) Dean at Hunter College, (CUNY). She is co-author of *Africa Tradition and Change*, a widely praised textbook published in 1972.

In "retirement" Rich served as Executive Director of The Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation. She is a co-founder of LaborArts, which curates and exhibits powerful images of the lives of working people.

Her adventures include taking teachers on Africa study tours to develop realistic curricula for U.S. elementary and secondary schools; lobbying the NY State legislature for adequate school funding; testifying before local and state legislatures on issues ranging from redistricting to health care and aging concerns; working with Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) to help elect progressive candidates to political office; and campaigning to safeguard medical benefits for New York City retirees.

*Legacy of Teaching Africa &
Excellence Award*

DR. EVELYN (EVIE) JONES RICH
Activist, Scholar, Educator, and Author

PRESENTED BY

Mora McLean
AAI President Emerita & Historian

Dr. Olivia Lynch
AAI Senior Education Advisor and Coordinator

WITH REMARKS FROM

Rachel Bernstein
Director, LaborArts

Nia Turner
Mentee & Bryn Mawr College Alumna '05

Lizette Colon
Proud Puerto Rican mother, Retired Counselor from
Hostos Community College/CUNY & Professional
Troublemaker



HONORING



AWARD RECIPIENT

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Accepted by Peter Laugharn, President & CEO

Peter Laugharn (pronounced LAW-harn) serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. Laugharn is a passionate leader with 25 years of foundation and nonprofit experience internationally, with a focus on improving the well-being of vulnerable children.

He was executive director of the Firelight Foundation from 2008 to 2014. Firelight identifies, funds, and supports promising African nonprofits serving vulnerable children and families in the areas of education, resilience, and health.

Prior to Firelight, Laugharn served for six years as executive director of the Netherlands-based Bernard van Leer Foundation, a private foundation that works to improve opportunities for children up to age 8 who are growing up in socially and economically difficult circumstances. He was director of programs at the Foundation for three years before becoming executive director.

Laugharn began his career at Save the Children, where he worked for 11 years in a variety of roles. Eight of those years, he was based in Bamako, Mali. Laugharn helped develop the Village Schools model, which promoted access to basic education, girls' schooling, and community participation. The model helped 45,000 children go to school and raised the number of primary schools in the country by 40 percent. Laugharn was later Save the Children's Mali Field Office director, West Africa Area director and then education advisor for Africa, providing technical assistance for programs in 10 countries.

A graduate of Stanford and Georgetown Universities, Laugharn holds a Ph.D. in education from the University of London. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco from 1982 to 1984. Laugharn was a co-founder of the International Education Funders Group and the Coalition for Children Affected by AIDS, and he serves on the boards of the Council on Foundations and the Pacific Council for International Policy.

Philanthropic Impact Award

THE CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION

Accepted by President and CEO, **Peter Laugharn**

PRESENTED BY

Rebecca Lowell Edwards
AAI Vice Chair & Trustee

Hibak Kalfan

Executive Director, Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR)

WITH REMARKS FROM

Natalia Kanem

Executive Director, UNFPA

Darren Walker

President, Ford Foundation

Gerry Salole

Former Head, European Foundation Centre, and Former
Chair, Trust Africa

Winnie Byanyima

Executive Director, UNAIDS & Under-Secretary-General
of the United Nations

Kennedy Odede

Founder & CEO, Shining Hope for Communities



HONORING



AWARD RECIPIENT

Debra Lee

BET CEO Emeritus, Author of "I AM DEBRA LEE" and founder of Leading Women Defined

Debra L. Lee, Chairman and CEO Emeritus of BET Networks, Founder of Leading Women Defined, Co-founder of The Monarchs Collective and author of *I AM DEBRA LEE*, is one of the most influential voices in the entertainment industry, with a trailblazing career spanning over 3 decades. For 13 years, Ms. Lee served as the Chairman & CEO of BET Networks, the leading provider of entertainment for the African-American audience and consumers of Black culture globally.

Ms. Lee currently serves as a Director on the Boards of Warner Bros. Discovery, Burberry Group plc, Marriott International and Procter & Gamble, and is the Chairman of Leading Women Defined Foundation, a foundation of Black female thought leaders, which she launched in 2009. Ms. Lee recently launched The Monarchs Collective, a venture created to put more people of color on corporate boards and in executive leadership positions.

Ms. Lee holds a B.A. in political science from Brown University, a J.D. from Harvard Law School and a master's in public policy from Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government. In 2014, she was awarded the Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D) from her alma mater, Brown University. Lee currently resides in Los Angeles and is a proud mother of two.

Business Leadership Award

DEBRA LEE

BET CEO Emeritus, Author of “I AM DEBRA LEE”
and Founder of Leading Women Defined

PRESENTED BY

Humble Lukanga

AAI Trustee

Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Director General, The World Trade Organization (WTO)

WITH REMARKS FROM

Tony Capuano

President & CEO Marriott International

Michael Armstrong

EVP, Worldwide TV Licensing & Operations at
Paramount Pictures



HONORING



AWARD RECIPIENT

MTN Group

*Accepted by Ralph Mupita,
Group President & CEO*

Ralph Mupita is the Group President and CEO of MTN Group, a position he has held since the 1st September 2020, having recently served as the MTN Group's Chief Financial Officer since April 2017. Prior to joining MTN, Ralph served as the Chief Executive Officer for Old Mutual Emerging Markets, providing financial service solutions to individuals and corporates across 19 countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Under his leadership, the Insurance Group's Emerging Market business serviced over 19 million customers and had R1 trillion of assets under management.

Ralph is a seasoned business leader with experience in engineering, construction, financial services and telecommunications. Since joining MTN, Ralph has played a pivotal role in the strengthening the Group's financial position, strategy formulation and successful listing on the Nigerian and Ghanaian Stock Exchanges.

Corporate Responsibility Award

MTN GROUP

Accepted by Group President & CEO, **Ralph Mupita**

PRESENTED BY

Robert McCarthy

AAI Vice Chair & Trustee

Witney Schneidman

CEO, Schneidman Associates & Former Deputy
Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs

WITH REMARKS FROM

Dr. Nicaise Ndembi

Senior Science Advisor to the Director of the Africa CDC

Thomas A. Bartlett

President & CEO, American Tower Corporation



FEATURING



H.E. Dr. Hage Geingob

President of the Republic of Namibia & Alumnus of AAI's Southern African Student Program

In March 2020, His Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob, was elected the third President of the Republic of Namibia for a second term. First elected in November 2014, President Geingob has served his country, and indeed the continent of Africa, with distinction. His illustrious career of public service also includes serving as the first Prime Minister of Namibia following independence from South Africa in 1990.

The President has also served as Minister of Trade and Industry and in 2007 was chosen as Vice-President of the ruling party and former liberation movement - South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). Throughout his life, President Geingob has been a champion of education for all of Namibia's people. AAI awarded the President a scholarship under its Southern Africa Student Program and the President's lifetime of achievements are a testament to achieving academic excellence. President Geingob earned a PhD from University of Leeds in the United Kingdom, a Master in International Relations from the New School for Social Research, and Bachelor of Arts from Fordham University, both degrees earned in New York, New York. President Geingob is a firm believer that "education is the greatest equaliser.



H.E. Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi

President of the Republic of Botswana

H.E. Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi was sworn in as the 5th President of the Republic of Botswana on 1st April 2018. Prior to this, he was Botswana's 8th Vice President from 2014.

As Vice President he was responsible for oversight of Government programmes including flagship programme such as: Poverty Eradication, Economic Diversification Drive and Employment Creation. He has served cabinet in various portfolios including as Minister for Presidential Affairs and Public Administration and Minister of Education and Skills Development.

Prior to public life, His Excellency Dr. Masisi had established a career in education. He was an Education Project Officer with UNICEF and worked extensively with the Ministry of Education as a Curriculum Specialist and in other capacities. In 1989 he studied at graduate level at Florida State University, USA, specializing in Social Studies, Education and Instructional Systems Design. He attained his MSc from FSU in 1990. In 1999 he was awarded a Commonwealth Chevening Scholarship to undertake graduate studies in Economics and Social Policy in Manchester University in the UK. In 2018, the University of Botswana conferred him an honorary doctorate.



H.E. Prof. Benedict Oramah

President and Chairman, African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)

Professor Benedict Oramah, a renowned Nigerian economist, was appointed President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) in 2015 after serving with distinction in other leadership positions at the Bank since 1994.

Afreximbank, a leading pan-African development finance institution, has made impressive strides under Prof. Oramah's leadership growing its assets (and contingent liabilities) by almost six-fold from about US\$5B at the end of September 2015, when he assumed office, to US\$31.1B by December 2022.

Dr. Oramah, an agricultural economist and author, holds M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. He is a recipient of many awards and honours including the high Nigerian national honour of the Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON) and 2023 "Business Leader of the Year."

In addition to serving as chairman of the Board of Directors of Afreximbank, He is also the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fund for Export Development in Africa (FEDA), chairman of the Management Board of Directors of the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS), the current chairman of the Executive Committee of the Arab-Africa Trade Bridges (AATB), and the chairman of the Board of Trustees of the African Union Covid-19 Response Fund. He is also a member of the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) Advisory Council, a member of the Practitioners Advisory Board of the Institute for Trade and Innovation (IfTI) at Offenburg University, Germany, and a member of the Emerging Markets Advisory Council of the Institute of International Finance (IIF-EMAC).

MODERATOR



Jennifer Zabasajja

Correspondent and Anchor, Bloomberg TV and Quicktake

Jennifer Zabasajja is a correspondent and anchor for Bloomberg TV and Quicktake. She focuses on live and pre-recorded video content on the African region across Bloomberg media platforms, from culture to business to media and more.

She previously anchored and reported on Bloomberg Quicktake's daily streaming morning shows. Her notable interviews include entrepreneurs and public sector leaders both domestically in the United States and abroad. Jennifer joined Bloomberg in New York in 2017 after years of producing and reporting at various networks including CBS News, NBC News, and the previously named CNNMoney platform.

She holds a bachelor's degree from New York University with a double major in broadcast journalism and sociology.



ADVANCED EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR AFRICANS

The Jim Ovia Foundation Leaders Scholarship

Launched in 2018, through partnerships with Ashesi University in Ghana and Covenant University in Nigeria, the Jim Ovia Foundation Leaders Scholarship is part of AAI's endeavor to educate and retain the talent of Africa's future leaders and scholars. With the support of the Jim Ovia Foundation, the scholarship is awarded to high-performing students from underrepresented backgrounds and provides awardees with a tuition-free world class education.

African Diplomatic Orientation & Engagement Program

Endorsed by the African Diplomatic Corps, the African Diplomatic Orientation & Engagement Program is designed to provide both new and experienced Ambassadors with an opportunity to learn from each other, government officials and sectoral experts to maximise their impact as international representatives in the United States.

PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION ABOUT AFRICA AND THE WORLD-WIDE AFRICAN DIASPORA

The State of Education on Africa Conference (SOE)

Each year, AAI hosts its annual State of Education on Africa Conference (SOE), a convening of educational innovators, decision-makers, funders, students, and stakeholders to discuss bold approaches to transforming education in and about global Africa. This conference features presentations and interviews on topics aimed at engaging students, parents, teachers and scholars, and anyone else who cares about producing, recovering, and disseminating scholarly-based knowledge about Africa and its worldwide Diaspora—below and beyond the tertiary education level.

AAI School Services Program

The Africa-America Institute (AAI) initially launched the Schools Services Program in the late 1960's to meet the dual challenges of eliminating harmful K-12 educational practices of introducing students to Africa solely through the lens of European domination and the persistence of poor educational outcomes, particularly among black students. Today, the program continues to work with K-12 communities to ensure that students have the educationally enriching and transformative experience of learning about global Africa through access to curricular content that is free of bias and misinformation, and classroom instruction that supports student learning, self-leadership, and academic excellence.

The program offers a range of mutually-reinforcing supports that include these areas:

1. Content focused curriculum review and training in classroom instruction that exposes students to rigorously researched knowledge about the centrality of global Africa in the creation of the United States, and the modern world.
2. Pedagogical training that draws on results-oriented research on teaching, learning, and the brain, to equip teachers to transform students—especially those who are disadvantaged by structural racism—into cognitively independent, high-achieving life-long learners.
3. Resources to strengthen the school climate including mechanisms to elevate, encourage, and learn from student voice—students' expression of what they feel about and want from their education so that students becomes agents of their own learning.
4. Coaching and skills-building designed to strengthen principals' and administrators' capacity to demonstrate culturally-responsive leadership— the capacity to cultivate the active support and engagement of all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members).

The School Services Program draws on AAI's extensive relationships in the United States and across the African continent, including world-renowned scholars who are producing knowledge on Global Africa, leading authorities on culturally responsive teaching and K-12 instructional design, organizations that can provide a rich array of Africa-focused content and teaching materials, and groups that specialize in elevating student voices, raising teachers' awareness of implicit bias, and other inputs to strengthen school leadership and climate.



SPECIAL INITIATIVES

School Services Program: Webinar Series

As part of AAI's School Services Program, AAI has collaborated with historian and NYU Professor Michael Gomez to produce a four-part Webinar Series on "Early and Medieval West Africa" to provide resources for school leaders and teachers to learn about African and African Diaspora histories and cultures. The program supports teachers in infusing their learnings to give students a more comprehensive understanding of our world.

Alumni Outreach Initiative

Launched in 2017, AAI's Alumni Outreach Initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to sustain and strengthen our network of over 23,000 Alumni. Created to foster relationships and keep alumni connected, engaged, and informed, AAI hosts coverings and public outreach events that showcase the positive impact of our alumni to inspire the next generation of African leaders.

Reparations & Racial Healing

AAI is an inaugural member of the Global Circle for Reparations and Racial Healing. This alliance unites 26 Black-led organizations to use their collective strength to drive a global reparations and racial healing agenda. As part of the Global Circle's Bretton Woods Committee, AAI works with influential international bodies like the World Bank and IMF to address racial disparities across the financial system.





Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, congratulates the Africa-America Institute and this year's distinguished honorees. We join AAI in recognizing and celebrating the many successes of Africa, Africans, and the African Diaspora across the world.

We also wish to recognize and celebrate the legacy of our dear friend and colleague, the late Ambassador Professor Hassana Alidou.



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Congratulations to all of this year's honorees.



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The Awards Gala helps support AAI as it strives to enrich the social fabric of humanity by connecting students and leaders across sectors, facilitating access to reliable information about Africa, and transforming the way we understand Africa and its worldwide diaspora. Over the past seven decades, AAI has provided over 23,000 scholarships and fellowships to African Students. Proceeds from the Annual Awards Gala will fund AAI's programs and initiatives including AAI Scholarships, School Services Program and the State of Education on Africa Conference.

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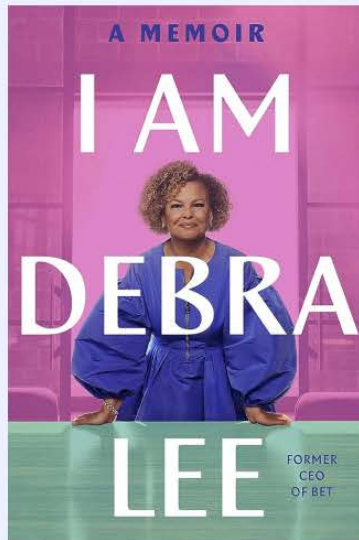
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For more information or inquiries, please contact **Jourden Warren**,
AAI's Chief of Strategic Partnerships and Engagement: jwarren@aaionline.org / +1 (646) 645-7286

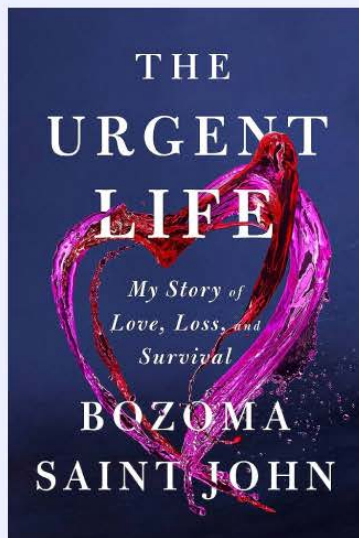


I Am Debra Lee: A Memoir

by Debra Lee

As an incredible glass-ceiling breaker and the woman who brought timeless television shows like *The Game* and *Being Mary Jane* to cable, Debra Lee has been the visionary responsible for elevating Black images and storytelling for decades. Now she's telling her own story, in an intimate and eye-opening tale about the triumphant and tricky moments of a career in entertainment. *I Am Debra Lee* is a page-turner, filled with deeply personal revelations, juicy celebrity intel, and electrifying behind-the-scenes stories that reveal how she went from a girl raised in the segregated South to leading the first Black company traded on the New York Stock Exchange and how she juggled social responsibility while managing a company targeted toward the Black community.

In a rousing narrative, Lee writes: "I don't just love Black culture--the magic in our hair, the swagger in our steps, the particular way we can say 'alright now' to fit our changing moods--Black culture saved me." In her exciting debut, she answers all of our questions about building an unapologetically Black enterprise as a Black woman. What to do when you're forced to attend a board meeting eight weeks after a C-section. How to manage a team of men when you're the first female CEO at the company. How she learned the hard way to say no to those in power when their vision didn't align with her purpose.



The Urgent Life: My Story of Love, Loss, and Survival

by Bozoma Saint John

When Bozoma Saint John's husband, Peter, died of cancer, she made one big decision: to live life urgently. Bozoma was no stranger to adversity, having lost her college boyfriend to suicide, navigated an interracial marriage, grieved a child born prematurely—a process that led to her and Peter's separation—and coparented the daughter who she and Peter shared. When Peter knew his cancer was terminal, he gave Bozoma a short list of things to do: cancel the divorce, and fix the wrongs immediately.

In *The Urgent Life*, Bozoma takes readers through the dizzying, numbing days of multiple griefs, and the courage which these sparked in her to live life in accordance with her deepest values time and time again. We witness Bozoma's journey forward through the highs and the lows, as she negotiates life as a woman determined to learn from tragedies to build a remarkable life worth living even in her brokenness. Bozoma's story is extraordinary, but her grief is not uncommon, and her courage is sure to touch any reader who has loved, mourned and is finding a path through loss and grief, as well as anyone who is maneuvering a pivot and wants to live life to its fullest.

70 Years of Transformation

We are proud to celebrate AAI on 70 years of educating the world on the African diaspora. We also recognize **Debra Lee** for receiving the 2023 Business Leadership Award for her commitment to diversity and inclusivity. Congratulations to all.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Africa-America Institute would like to thank the following for making this year's event possible

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Jourden Warren



Congratulations to the Africa-America Institute for 70 years of impact through promoting enlightened engagement between Africa and America.

Congratulations to Debra Lee, the MTN Group, Evelyn Jones Rich, and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for exemplifying and supporting this mission.

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P&G

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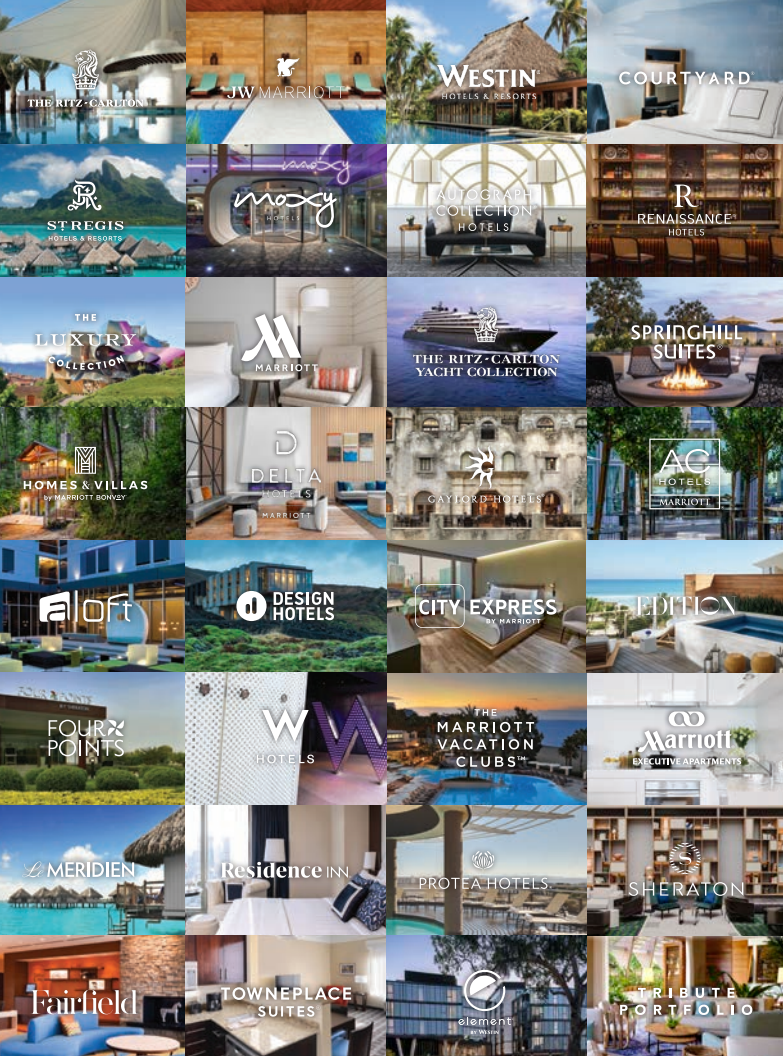


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Debra Lee

on receiving the **2023 Business Leadership Award** for her longstanding commitment to inclusion and belonging for all. We are delighted to call Debi a trusted board member, cherished colleague, and a dear friend.

Debi, thank you for all you have done to advance inclusion and continue to do to support the next generation of leaders at Marriott International and in society.

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