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Contact: Tamara Ashford
tamara@glaaacc.org
(323) 292-1297

Cynthia Gibson
ckg@ckgcommunications.net
(310) 410-9039

GLAAACC HONORS EXCELLENCE AT ECONOMIC AWARDS GALA

Keynote Speaker U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis Focused on Jobs

The 19th Annual Greater Los Angeles African American Chamber of Commerce Economic Awards Dinner honored the accomplishments and services of businesses and individuals working for the greater good of African American businesses. U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis delivered the keynote address to the capacity audience at the JW Marriott at L.A. LIVE. The Secretary focused her talk on the Obama Administration's accomplishments in the area of job creation and its plan for increasing employment opportunities and sustaining the current rise in employment. The evening was hosted by actor Dorien Wilson, best known as Professor Stanley Oglevee in the hit UPN sitcom "*The Parkers*" and for the character Eddie in the HBO series "*Dream On*."

Award recognition went to individuals, majority corporations and African American businesses in 13 award categories. Jessie J. Knight, Jr., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer for San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) and one of the highest ranking African Americans in the Public Utilities industry, received GLAAACC's prestigious Chairman's Award. GLAAACC Chairman Gene Hale noted, "When you look at his career trajectory, it's really quite phenomenal."

NBCUniversal garnered the honor of GLAAACC's Corporation of the Year for its contributions and support of African American business community. The media powerhouse is one of the world's leading media and entertainment companies in the development of production and marketing of entertainment, news and information to a diverse and global audience.

During her address, Labor Secretary Solis directly outlined a number of initiatives President Barack Obama has enacted to support small business, including 17 tax cuts, and a 50% reduction in the time it takes the federal government to pay its small business contractor. She also cited current small business legislation that is pending approval, such as making permanent the zero capital gains on small business investment and rewarding job creation with a tax credit. A transcript of Secretary Solis' presentation at GLAAACC's Economics Awards Dinner is available in its entirety at http://www.dol.gov/sec/media/speeches/20120322_LAAACC.htm.

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“With labor and employment being such a major issue in the upcoming election, we were honored to have Labor Secretary Solis as our keynote speaker,” remarked GLAAACC Chairman Gene Hale.

Walter Rhodes, Southern California Edison’s Vice President of Supply Management received the Purchasing Executive Award for his exceptional support for the purchasing of goods and services from small and African American Businesses.

GLAAACC’s African American Business of the Year was awarded to the construction management firm McKissack & McKissack. The 22-year old firm specializes in project management, architecture and engineering and was ranked by Engineering New-Record as one of the top 100 construction management firms in the country.

Brandon Neal, Director of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, received the Federal Executive Small Business Advocate Award. Mr. Neal ensures that Small Businesses are treated fairly and have an opportunity to compete and be selected for a fair amount of the agency’s contracting and subcontracting dollars.

Sherman Gay, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s (L.A. METRO) Business Outreach Officer of Diversity of Economic Opportunity, and Steve Lamar, Corporate Community Relations Manager & Project Manager for Swinerton Builders were among five deserving individuals awarded the Small Business Advocate Award for their tireless efforts to assist small businesses in reaching the next level of success.

For going above and beyond the call of duty for over three decades, Fire Chief Brian L. Cummings of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) received the Public Service Award. Joining the LAFD in 1980, Fire Chief Cummings has had an exemplary career, first as a Firefighter, then Engineer and rose to the rank of Captain and then Battalion Chief. In 2010, he was promoted to the position of Assistant Chief, followed by an appointment to the position of Chief of Staff.

Aon Corporation was honored as GLAAACC’s Mentor Corporation of the year. As a GLAAACC corporate member and mentor, Aon Corporation participated in GLAAACC’s 2011-2012 Business Evolution Program (BEP), mentoring small and minority-owned businesses. Additionally, Aon Corporation will continue their mentorship with GLAAACC member business Secured Data Shredding for another year. Aon Corporation is the leading global provider of risk management services, insurance and insurance brokerage, and human resource consulting, management and outsourcing.

Southern California Edison was the presenting sponsor for the 19th Annual Economic Awards Dinner. Event Sponsors included American Honda Motor Co., Inc., Bank of America, Hensel Phelps Construction Co., Northrop Grumman Corporation, Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A., Inc., Union Bank and Wells Fargo. More photos and a full list of the honorees is available on GLAAACC’s website:

www.glaaacc.org/sponsorship.