



The Congressional Award | Public Law 96-114

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Congress to join community and civic leaders in honoring 267 youth with the Congressional Award Gold Medal in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. (June 18, 2015) – Members of Congress joined community and corporate leaders on June 17 in honoring the [267 recipients](#) of the Congressional Award Gold Medal – Congress’ highest award for youth. This annual event recognizes individuals that have dedicated hundreds of hours of service to their communities. The awards were presented in the Cannon Caucus Room on Capitol Hill.

Two award ceremonies were hosted by emcees **Chip Reid and Andrea Roane**, both of *CBS*, and **Youth Service America’s Steve Culbertson** served as the keynote speaker for both events. [Youth Service America](#) is a partner of the Congressional Award and provides volunteer opportunities for young people in all 50 states.

In addition to the numerous youth awardees from across the country being honored this year, **Mr. Steve Pemberton of Walgreens was recognized with the special *Horizon Award*** for his many charitable and philanthropic contributions. Overcoming insurmountable odds, Mr. Pemberton has gone from being a forgotten ward of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to becoming a trailblazing Divisional Vice President at Walgreens and the company’s first Chief Diversity Officer in its 113 year history. Pemberton’s memoir, *A Chance in the World: An Orphan Boy*, chronicles his difficult childhood and his eventual success in the corporate world, providing motivation and inspiration to anyone facing adversity. Previous recipients of this recognition include Wynton Marsalis, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Drew Brees, and Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson.

The Honorable John Dingell was also presented with the Wallop Howard Leadership Award for his record-setting tenure in the United States House of Representatives from December 13, 1955 through January 2, 2015. Named for the founders of the Congressional Award program, this special honor recognizes individuals from the public sector who have worked for the betterment of America’s youth. These recipients have truly forged ahead in expanding opportunities for young Americans and setting exceptional examples for which youth can aspire. Previous recipients of this recognition include President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter, Senator Bob Dole, Senator John Glenn, Secretary Colin Powell and Senator Alan Simpson.

The Congressional Award also recognized **Mrs. Mary Rodgers of Abington, Pennsylvania with the Inspiration Award** for her continued work and devotion on behalf of America’s Youth. Mrs. Rodgers has served as an Advisor and mentor for over 200 young people working towards the Congressional Award. The Advisor is imperative to the success of the young people and Mrs. Rodgers has proven herself to be the best of the best, taking personal time to work on goals, travel abroad for service missions, and chaperone the youth on camping expeditions.

The special awards to Mr. Pemberton, the Honorable John Dingell and Mrs. Rodgers were presented at the Gold Medal Youth Recognition Dinner on June 16 at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center with the 2015 Gold Medalists and their families in attendance.

Throughout the year, Congressional Award recipients are honored with Bronze and Silver Medals at local ceremonies and medal presentations by Members of Congress at the district and state levels. The Gold Medal Ceremony is hosted each June at the US Capitol. Since its inception in 1979, the Congressional Award has recognized thousands of young Americans committed to serving their country and improving themselves, representing over 7 million hours of public service. Currently over 40,000 students from all 50 states are actively working toward earning a Congressional Award.

The Congressional Award, a public-private partnership established by Congress in 1979 under Public Law 96-114, is a non-competitive program open to young people ages 14-23, regardless of mental or physical challenges, or socioeconomic status. The Congressional Award Foundation teaches participants to set and achieve personally challenging goals that build character and foster community service, personal development and citizenship.

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