



New York Urban League's Champions of Diversity luncheon honors excellence



One of the most distinguished events held during February Black History Month was the illustrious New York Urban League's (NYUL) 2023 Champions of Diversity Awards and Symposium which expanded from a stellar signature breakfast to an elaborate day long program attended by over 250 leaders from across New York's business and civic sectors who gathered to exchange ideas on advancing diversity, equity and inclusion and to celebrate those who are making a tangible impact. The event raised more than \$300,000 in support of NYUL's community empowerment programs. The program was filled with elegance and purpose and showcased the esteemed civil rights organization's curriculums dedicated to the empowerment of New York's African American and other marginalized communities through economic empowerment, career development, job training, education, mentorship and health advocacy. The annual event returned to the posh Plaza Hotel and was hosted by NYUL President and CEO Arva R. Rice, emceed by WNBC-TV anchor David Ushery, and chaired by Helen C. Shelton, NYUL Board Member and Global Chief Diversity Officer at FINN Partners.

NYUL's 2023 Champions of Diversity Awards and Symposium began with an Invocation by Rev. Jacques A. DeGraff followed by a networking breakfast and series of symposia addressing topics such as Leading While Black and Brown, What's Next? Emerging Trends in DEI, and an inside look at NYUL's innovative Diversity Lab: D+I



NHL Celebrates Its Own



2023 Champions Honorees with NYUL President Arva R. Rice and 2023 Champions of Diversity Chairwoman, Helen Shelton of FINN Partners



NYUL Diversity Lab Panelists James McDonald, AvalonBay Communities, NYUL's Sandra Garcia, Sharon Barnes-Waters, Audacy, and George Rodriguez, Fidelis Care



NYUL Board - 2023 Champions of Diversity



2023 NYUL Champions of Diversity Honorees



National Hockey League Commissioner Gary Bettman, Leadership Champion Honoree Kimberly Davis, NYUL President Arva R. Rice

Lab Uncovered. Panelists represented a range of industries and sectors, and included: Chris Collins, founder of the fragrance brand World of Chris Collins; Lori Ferguson, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey; Careshia Moore, Usher's New Look, the global nonprofit youth development organization; Cecilia Nelson-Hurt, Heidrick & Struggles; Kathryn Wylde, Partnership For New York City; Sharon Foretia, BlackRock; Sharné C. Jackson, The Fragrance Foundation; Chris Metzler, National Urban League; Corey Smith, LVMH; Sandra Garcia, New York Urban League; Sharon Barnes-Waters, Audacy; James McDonald, AvalonBay Communities; and, George Rodriguez, Fidelis Care.

The program was the gift that just kept giving. After a delicious, seated lunch, the Awards Luncheon resumed with a surprise special performance by Aramie Payton from the Broadway smash hit, MJ The Musical who refreshed the crowd followed by a quaint Fireside Chat with Rice and MSNBC President, Rashida

Jones. Then the program honored those who have led the charge with standard-bearing initiatives that are changing the face of their respective industries. This year's Champions Honorees included Linda G. Levy, President of The Fragrance Foundation, named the first-ever Catalyst Award Honoree in recognition of her leadership in advancing DEI in the multi-billion-dollar fragrance industry; Kim Davis, Senior Executive Vice President of the National Hockey League awarded the Leadership Award; HR&A Advisors recognized as Champion in Recruitment, Retention and Belonging; Clarissa Moses-Washington, Manager of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion of jetBlue Airways received the Rising Star Champion Award; and Kenneth Ebie, Executive Director, Black Entrepreneurs NYC was named Equity & Inclusion Ambassador. The program concluded with lovely closing remarks from NYUL Board Chairman and Catalyst Partners Managing Director Ward Corbett.

"For over 100 years, the

New York Urban League has led the way in the education, employment, and empowerment of underserved African Americans across the five boroughs of New York City," said Rice. "The 2023 Champions class represents a group of leaders whose dedication to improving diversity, equity and inclusion in their respective industries and in service to BIPOC communities is truly unparalleled, setting the pace for others to follow."

Added Shelton, "FINN Partners is a proud supporter and collaborator of the New York Urban League. Driving diversity, equity and inclusion in the corporate landscape is inherent to our respective missions. We salute our 2023 Champions and thank all involved in making this event a movement towards impactful change."

Generous sponsors of 2023 Champions included Catalyst Champion Sponsor, The Fragrance Foundation; Diversity Champion Sponsors FINN Partners, NHL, Publicis Group, White & Case; and, Equity Champion Sponsors BlackRock, Bloomin' Brands Inc., jetBlue, and L'Oreal. (Photos by Gerald Peart)

About the New York Urban League

The New York Urban League's mission is to enable African Americans and other underserved ethnic communities to secure a first-class education, economic self-reliance, and equal respect of their civil rights through programs, services, and advocacy. For a century, the NYUL has helped challenged New Yorkers find humanity, connect and help

each other, and gain access to equal opportunity in employment, education, financial and technological literacy, and more. During this time, the New York Urban League is proud to have inspired, influenced, and ignited over one million Black people to achieve their highest aspirations. NYUL remains a vital resource for New York's African American and Latino populations, investing to transform the lives of over 5,000 families each year. The New York Urban League, Inc. is one of the local affiliates of the National Urban League. Please visit us at www.nyul.org to learn more about our efforts.



Equity & Inclusion Ambassador Kenneth Ebie, Black Entrepreneurs NYC



Rising Star Champion Clarissa Moses-Washington, Manger of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, JetBlue Airways Corporation



Aramie Payton-MJ The Musical-performs



Rashida Jones, President, MSNBC speaks during a Fireside Chat with NYUL President Arva R. Rice