

Willard M. McRae Community Diversity Award



Willard M. McRae

Since 2001, the Willard M. McRae Community Diversity Award is presented annually to honor an individual who has made an outstanding and ongoing contribution to the cause of promoting and celebrating diversity, equity, and inclusion in the communities served by Liberty Bank. It is named in honor of the late Willard McRae, past chairman of the Liberty Bank Board of Directors and a founding member of the Liberty Bank Foundation Board of Directors. A lifelong Middletown resident who passed away in early 2016, Willard was known for his extraordinary commitment to equal access and opportunities for all, regardless of economic status, race, background, disability, or other factors. His contributions to children's mental health, education, and human services made a positive difference in the lives of thousands of people.

Through involvement with a community service organization, the individual selected to receive the Community Diversity Award will have enhanced the quality of life by raising awareness that diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice are sources of strength in our communities. He/she will be a leader in building positive relationships between different people — relationships in which they view their differences as assets, not liabilities.

Criteria by which award nominees will be evaluated include:

- Exemplary contribution to and depth of involvement in one or more community organizations.
- Extraordinary participation over an extended period of time in community activities that promote and celebrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice.
- Demonstrated leadership in enhancing the quality of life.
- Significant impact on the building of positive relationships between different people—whether their differences be of race, ethnic background, disability, religion, gender, culture, national origin, economic status, or any other aspect of diversity.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Nominees must be individuals who either live in the area served by Liberty Bank or conduct their community service activities within the area. That area is defined as all of Middlesex and New Haven Counties, plus the towns of Andover, Berlin, Bloomfield, Bozrah, Bristol, Colchester, Columbia, Coventry, East Hartford, East Lyme, Franklin, Glastonbury, Groton, Hartford, Hebron, Lebanon, Lyme, Manchester, Mansfield, Marlborough, Montville, New Britain, New London, Newington, Norwich, Old Lyme, Plainville, Rocky Hill, Salem, Shelton, Southington, Sprague, Stonington, Waterford, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windham, and Windsor. Nominees must be 18 years of age or over.
- Persons previously nominated for the award may be nominated again, but a new nomination form must be submitted. Previous winners of the award may not be nominated again.
- Posthumous nominations will not be accepted.

Selection Process:

Nominations for the award are solicited from the communities served by Liberty Bank each year. A committee consisting of Liberty Bank officers and leaders from the communities served by the bank will review them, and may conduct interviews of nominees selected as finalists before determining the award winner.

Award:

The recipient of the Willard M. McRae Community Diversity Award may direct a \$5,000 donation from the Liberty Bank Foundation to the non-profit organization of his/her choice. The non-profit must be certified by the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable organization under IRS rule 501(c)(3).

How to Make a Nomination:

The nomination period is announced each year online and in newspapers serving Liberty Bank's market area. Nomination forms can be downloaded from websites of Liberty Bank (www.liberty-bank.com) or the Liberty Bank Foundation (www.libertybankfoundation.org) during the nomination period.

Questions about the Willard M. McRae Community Diversity Award may be directed to **Toral Maher** at (860) 638-2961 or tmaher@liberty-bank.com.

Willard M. McRae Community Diversity Award Recipients

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| 2019 | Michael Rohde , Meriden
Past Mayor of the City of Meriden
Co-Founder, Meriden Farmers Market
Meriden Daffodil Festival organizing committee
Meriden Puerto Rican Festival organizing committee |
| 2018 | Chandler J. Howard , Farmington
President and CEO, Liberty Bank
Federal Reserve Board Community Depository Institutions Advisory Council; Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce; Middlesex Hospital; Connecticut Bankers Association; Charter Oak State University; Urban League of Greater Hartford; Greater Hartford YMCA; Middlesex United Way; United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut |
| 2017 | Lottie Scott , Norwich
City of Norwich Ellis Walker Ruley Committee; Norwich Arts Center; Norwich Historical Society; Norwich NAACP; Norwich Rotary Club |
| 2016 | Christopher George , New Haven
Executive Director, Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) |
| 2015 | Maria Campos-Harlow , Wallingford
Executive Director, Spanish Community of Wallingford |
| 2014 | Sara Chaney , New London
Product Manager, Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center
Community volunteer and mentor |
| 2013 | Teresa C. Younger , Shelton
Executive Director, Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Past Chairperson, Girl Scouts of Connecticut |
| 2012 | Elsa Nuñez, Willimantic
President, Eastern Connecticut State University
Founder, Eastern Academic Service Center and Dual College Enrollment Initiative |

Willard M. McRae Community Diversity Award Recipients

- 2011** **Jacqueline Owens**, Lebanon
President, Norwich Branch NAACP
Co-Founder, Dr. Martin Luther King Luncheon and March, annual Black History Program, annual World Youth Celebration Day, and Community Kwanzaa Celebration
- 2010** **Ulysses B. Hammond**, Waterford
President, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Trust Fund
Co-Founder and Co-Chair, New London Tutoring for Success Program
Founder, Minority Student Support Program, Connecticut College
- 2009** **Willard M. McRae**, Middletown
Past chairman of the Board of Directors of Liberty Bank; founding member of the Board of Directors of the Liberty Bank Foundation; co-founder of the Middlesex Coalition for Children, the Middlesex Child and Adolescent Service System Program, and the Wesleyan University Upward Bound program
- 2008** **Alejandro Melendez-Cooper**, New London
Director of the Community Health Centers of Groton and New London
Founder of the Hispanic Alliance of Southeastern Connecticut
- 2007** **Arthur Meyers**, Middletown
Director of the Russell Library
- 2006** **Catina Caban-Owen**, Windham
Social worker, Windham Public Schools
Advocate for equal access to education and healthcare
- 2005** **Joseph Sheffey**, Uncasville
Founder of Child Adoption Resource Association, an adoption agency focusing on interracial placements
- 2004** **Lydia Brewster**, Haddam Neck
Community activist and founder of Middletown's North End Action Team
- 2003** **Ramón Ortiz**, Willimantic
Community activist and service coordinator for Village Heights Apartments
- 2002** **Jane Glover**, New London
Founder of Kenté Enterprises and former mayor of New London
- 2001** **Claire Gaudiani**, New London
Former president of Connecticut College and the New London Development Corporation