

Illinois Human Rights Commission Presents Second Round of Diamond Award Recipients

Commission Honors Three Illinoisans Fighting for Justice and Equity

Wednesday, June 20, 2019 – Illinois Human Rights Commission

(Chicago) The Illinois Human Rights Commission (IHRC) presented its IHRC Diamond Awards during the Juneteenth Celebration on Wednesday, June 19, 2019. The Juneteenth event was held in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR). The event celebrated Juneteenth Emancipation Day by honoring three individuals who have dedicated their careers to protecting human and civil rights for all Illinoisans through activism, leadership and multi-generational discourse.

During the ceremony at the James R. Thompson Center, IHRC Executive Director Philip Dalmage presented the IHRC Diamond Award to Myiti Sengstacke-Rice, Michelle Duster and Dr. Haki R. Madhubuti, PhD., for their exemplary community service, extraordinary bodies of work and activism.

These three Diamond Award honorees join the inaugural honorees, Jazmine Cruz, Bonnie Allen and Alexandra Sosa, who were all recognized with this award during IHRC's Women's History Month ceremony in March 2019. The IHRC Diamond Award Series will continue through the year with two additional events to be announced.

Governor J.B. Pritzker served as the keynote speaker at the ceremony and issued an official proclamation commemorating Juneteenth and Illinois's observance.

"As we celebrate Juneteenth, we are reminded that this occasion marks the recognition of the news of emancipation for each former slave. This day, June 19, 1865, became a significant cog in Freedom's wheel; moving us down the road which would be long-traveled, and the quest for equality that would be hard-fought," IHRC Executive Director Philip Dalmage said. "Through faith and perseverance of the people, and with the enactment of the Thirteenth Amendment, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the Illinois Human Rights Act, the descendants of former slaves here in the State of Illinois can celebrate this day in this state, in this country, as Americans, free and equal."

Juneteenth Emancipation Day celebrates the day enslaved African-Americans in Texas were informed of their freedom a full two-and-one-half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. Juneteenth has become a nationally recognized holiday throughout Black communities, celebrating the freedom of nearly 3.5 million enslaved African-Americans.

The Illinois Human Rights Commission's Diamond Award recipients were joined by Governor JB Pritzker in celebration of Juneteenth at the James R. Thompson Center. Pictured left to right are, Event Master of Ceremonies, Matt McGill (WVON On-Air Personality), Deputy Governor Sol Flores, James Bennett, IDHR Director, Michelle Duster, Honoree, IL Governor JB Pritzker, Dr Haki R. Madhubuti, Honoree, Myiti Sengstacke-Rice, Honoree and Philip Dalmage, Executive Director of the Illinois Human Rights Commission.

Click on the link below to view the recipients' award picture.

[Juneteenth Recipients Award Pic.jpg](#)

For more information about the Illinois Human Rights Commission, visit our website www.illinois.gov/ihr.