NEA honors Delbert Richardson for traveling African American Museum The Unspoken Truths

Annual gala also marks 50th anniversary of the NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner

BOSTON—The National Education Association has presented Delbert Richardson with the NEA Carter G. Woodson Memorial Award for his unique and remarkable traveling African American museum. His museum, The Unspoken Truths, paints the tragedy of slavery and racial discrimination in vivid colors and, at the same time, serves as a reminder of African Americans’ many contributions to America.

Since 1967, NEA has recognized and honored those who have fought — and continue to fight — for human and civil rights. This year, NEA honored the outstanding work of 12 American social justice heroes at its annual Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner on Saturday, July 1, in Boston. The theme of the awards dinner is, “Living the Legacy: After 50 Years, Still We Rise.”

“Delbert Richardson embodies the spirit of Dr. Maya Angelou’s beloved poem ‘Still I rise,’” said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García. “Through his deeds and actions, this human and civil rights hero is still rising and carrying the torch forward. Tonight, we renew our commitment to stand for racial and social justice and pledge to continue to shed a light on his work as he guides and inspires us all.”

Richardson, a warehouse worker, created The Unspoken Truths museum without any support from foundations, corporations or other institutions. Through powerful storytelling and artifacts, Richardson has created an unforgettable experience for all who visit his museum. In chilling silence, the visitors walk through a collection that includes actual slave shackles, branding irons, authentic Ku Klux Klan robes and photographs of lynching.

“Following in the great footsteps of the ‘Father of Black History,’ Carter G. Woodson, is an honor,” said Delbert Richardson. “Due to his seminal work, The Mis-Education of The Negro, my traveling museum, along with this prestigious award, ensure his legacy regarding greater recognition of African American history continues here and throughout the world.”

In a 40-foot display presentation called “Still We Rise,” Richardson displays common everyday American items that African Americans invented. The presentation also displays 10 storyboards that focus specifically on the many contributions of African Americans in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). With this museum display, Richardson tries to inspire children of color to go beyond sports or entertainment. Whether a museum director or a middle school student, all who visit The Unspoken Truths museum will leave with a better understanding of the depth of suffering experienced by African American ancestors and have their assumptions and beliefs challenged.

To read his full bio, please click here. Watch a video about how the Unspoken Truth is reaching children and adults never before exposed up-close to their history.

NEA also recognized the anniversary of its merger with the American Teachers Association, which represented black teachers in the segregated public school systems of the South. ATA originally created the Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner, and, as part of the merger, NEA continues this tradition 50 years later.

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The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing more than 3 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.