



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE NEW ORLEANS CITIZEN DIPLOMACY COUNCIL ANNOUNCES THE RECIPIENTS OF ITS "OUTSTANDING CITIZEN DIPLOMAT AWARD. "

New Orleans, LA June 26, 2008– Dr. Robert A. Thomas, interim director of the Loyola University New Orleans School of Mass Communication, Dr. Raphael Cassimere, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of New Orleans and Vicki Weeks, Executive Director of Belle Reve New Orleans, will each receive the Outstanding Citizen Diplomat Award from the New Orleans Citizen Diplomacy Council.

This is the second year that the New Orleans Citizen Diplomacy Council will honor three professional in the community for shaping U.S. foreign relations by meeting with international guests sent to New Orleans from the U.S. Department of State.

This award will be presented at a reception honoring New Orleans Citizen Diplomacy Council volunteers on June 26, 2008 at the Southern Food and Beverage Museum in the Riverwalk 5:30 – 7:30 pm.

Annually, the U.S. Department of State brings participants to the United States from all over the world to meet and confer with their professional counterparts and to experience the U.S. firsthand. The visitors, who are current or potential leaders in government, politics, the media, education, and other fields, are selected by American Officials overseas. More than 200 current and former Heads of State, 1,500 cabinet-level ministers, and many other distinguished world leaders in government and the private sector are alumni of the International Visitor Leadership Program.

The New Orleans Citizen Diplomacy Council (*formerly the Council for International Visitors*) is a local non-profit that arranges professional appointments for international guests of the U.S. Department of State visiting Louisiana. Its goal is to enhance respect and communication through international exchanges and to promote the City of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana as important business and cultural centers. Since Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans Citizen Diplomacy Council has hosted over 700 visitors from 145 countries in New Orleans to participate and witness the economic and social recovery of the city.

Biographies and pictures of award winners are available upon request.

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