



UTAH GLOBAL DIPLOMACY

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UTAH BUSINESSMAN AND PHILANTHROPIST AMB. JOHN PRICE HONORED FOR LIFETIME COMMITMENT TO DIPLOMACY

Second Annual Citizen Diplomacy Day Recognizes Utahns' Exemplary Contributions to Global Engagement

Salt Lake City, UT – In celebration of the second annual Utah Citizen Diplomacy Day, Utah Global Diplomacy proudly announces the recipients of the 2025 Utah Citizen Diplomacy Awards. These awards honor individuals for their outstanding dedication to fostering international relations and strengthening connections between Utahns and leaders across the globe.

“Now more than ever, we need American citizens committed to building a more free, prosperous, and secure world,” said Felecia Maxfield-Barrett, President & CEO of Utah Global Diplomacy. “Through these awards, we recognize the remarkable contributions of volunteer citizen diplomats and celebrate their enduring impact in creating meaningful cross-cultural connections.”

The 2025 honorees include Representative James Dunnigan, Mr. Leonard Bagalwa, Ruby Vejar, and Ambassador John Price. Each recipient was nominated by community members and selected from a distinguished pool of leaders dedicated to diplomacy and international engagement.

- **Representative James Dunnigan** was awarded the **Diplomatic Leadership in Governance Award** for his dedication to engaging with visiting dignitaries from around the world and strengthening Utah’s global presence. His unwavering commitment to diplomacy is evident in his efforts to uplift others, bridge divides, and champion integrity in governance.
- **Leonard Bagalwa**, Founder and Executive Director of Utah Valley Refugees, received the **Goodwill Ambassador Award** for his work in providing essential resources to individuals and families resettling in Utah. Through his leadership, he has empowered refugees with access to employment, housing, healthcare, and education, exemplifying the role of a goodwill ambassador by fostering cultural connections and advocating for those in need.
- **Ruby Vejar** was honored with the **Young Diplomat of Utah Award** for her leadership in Model United Nations, research on structural inequality, and initiatives addressing food insecurity and



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teen suicide prevention on the Sioux Reservation. Her work connecting Ogden residents with students in Kenya through mentorship and scholarships demonstrates her commitment to education as a force for global change. With international experiences in Scotland and Ireland, she brings a valuable perspective on cultural influences in global policy.

- **Ambassador John Price** received Utah Global Diplomacy's highest honor, the **Taza Armstrong Peirce Lifetime Achievement Award**, in recognition of his lifelong commitment to educating policymakers, students, and the public about Africa's challenges and opportunities. Through his writings, speeches, and advocacy, Ambassador Price has ensured Africa's significance remains at the forefront of international discussions. His philanthropic contributions, including the John Price Business Building at the University of Utah, highlight his belief in education as a transformative force for future global leaders. His generous support of cultural institutions and public policy initiatives has played a crucial role in strengthening Utah's global engagement.

Utah Global Diplomacy also honored more than 240 recipients of the annual Citizen Diplomat Award, recognizing Utahns for their efforts in fostering global connections. The awards were presented at the Utah State Capitol during Diplomacy Day on the Hill, where 20 internationally focused nonprofit organizations and educational institutions gathered to showcase their impact in Utah and around the world.

Salt Lake City participated in the event with an official Diplomacy Day Statement, presented by Councilmember Chris Wharton, and honored Jeannette Misaka and Gwen and Bob Springmeyer for their outstanding support of the Sister Cities program.

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ABOUT UTAH GLOBAL DIPLOMACY: Utah Global Diplomacy is dedicated to fostering respect and understanding between Utah residents and individuals from around the world. This mission is carried out through citizen diplomacy—the belief that every individual has the right and responsibility to shape U.S. foreign relations through personal connections. Utah Global Diplomacy advances these efforts through International Exchange Programs (in partnership with the U.S. State Department), World Affairs Lectures, Dialogues & Conversations, and the Young Diplomats of Utah program. To join the Utah Global Diplomacy community, visit www.utahglobaldiplomacy.org or email info@utahglobaldiplomacy.org.