



UTAH GLOBAL DIPLOMACY

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Utah's Top Citizen Diplomats Recognized for Building Economic and Cultural Bridges

Salt Lake City, Utah – Utah's top citizen diplomats were recognized for their trailblazing work in establishing and strengthening Utah's international relationships. Utah Global Diplomacy's Citizen Diplomat Award recognizes individuals who have contributed significantly to building economic and cultural bridges with countries and leaders across the globe.

This year's honorees include:

- Franz Kolb, Director of International Trade & Diplomacy, Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity

Kolb is considered a pillar of Utah's international trade and diplomacy community. Known for his exceptional contributions to fostering global cooperation and economic opportunities, Kolb has dedicated his decades-long career to strengthening ties between Utah and countries across the globe, promoting economic growth and enhancing diplomatic relations. Franz's exceptional diplomatic acumen led to his appointment as the U.S. Department of State's Honorary Consular to Austria in Utah, a position he currently holds.

- Chris and Erlynn Lansing, Directors of the Church Hosting Office, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The Lansing have distinguished themselves as exceptional leaders in fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting international goodwill through their roles as Directors of the Church Hosting Office at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Their dedication to creating meaningful connections among diverse communities and promoting open dialogue has left an indelible mark on the world of citizen diplomacy. Together, they have hosted over 1,700 visitors from over 100 countries.

- DeAnna and Lynn DeBry, Volunteer Hosts, Utah Global Diplomacy (retired)

The DeBry have made significant contributions to the local and global communities through their selfless dedication to volunteerism, education, and community enrichment. They have fostered positive change and forged meaningful connections with hundreds of foreign visitors over the last 40 years. Together, they epitomize the values of volunteerism and community enrichment through cross-cultural understanding.

“Our 2023 honorees are incredible global citizens who have devoted a tremendous amount of their time and resources to advancing citizen diplomacy in Utah,” said Utah Global Diplomacy CEO, Felecia Maxfield-Barrett. “Each honoree has helped shape Utah’s international connections in significant ways, often without fanfare and recognition, one handshake at a time. We are pleased to highlight their contributions to building global bridges that directly benefit Utah.”

Kolb, The Lansings, and the DeBrys were recognized in front of an audience of fellow volunteers and international enthusiasts. The recognition event included remarks by Ambassador Ronald Neumann. Neumann is a distinguished diplomat having served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and three times as Ambassador; to Algeria, Bahrain, and finally to Afghanistan from July 2005 to April 2007. Today, Neumann is president of the American Academy of Diplomacy.

Neumann’s remarks, given just one day after the 22nd anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, focused on rebuilding and strengthen America’s diplomatic influence. Neumann highlighted the need for modernizing diplomatic service in effort to recruit and retain the highest quality foreign service officers. He recognized the importance of citizen diplomacy and proposed establishing a foreign service reserve corps that could be activated as needed to support the Department of State and help reestablish and strengthen U.S. relations across the globe. Utah’s globally minded and multilingual population could play a significant role in this effort.

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About Utah Global Diplomacy:

Utah Global Diplomacy is committed to promoting respect and understanding between the people of Utah and other nations. This is done through citizen diplomacy - the concept that every individual has the right, even the responsibility, to help shape U.S. foreign relations by connecting with each other one handshake at a time. Utah Global Diplomacy applies citizen diplomacy efforts through its International Exchange Programs (in partnership with the U.S. State Department), World Affairs Lectures, Dialogues, & Conversations, and its Young Diplomats of Utah program. You can join Utah Global Diplomacy’s community and conversations at www.utahglobaldiplomacy.org or by emailing info@utahglobaldiplomacy.org.