

American Airlines Celebrates Team Members' Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion With the 10th Annual Earl G. Graves Award; Morgan State University Receives \$10,000 Grant
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FORT WORTH, Texas, Sept. 27, 2018 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- American Airlines today hosted its 10th annual Earl G. Graves Award for Leadership in Diversity and Inclusion luncheon recognizing team members across the company for their advocacy for diversity, equity and inclusion at work and in the community.



"Every day, we strive to ensure that our team members and customers feel welcomed and confident in the trust they place in us. We believe pushing ourselves to be better will create opportunities for us all to come together every day in service of one another, our customers and our communities," said Patrick O'Keeffe, American's Senior Vice President of People. "These honorees demonstrate exceptional leadership in their efforts to promote diversity and inclusion."

At the ceremony, American awarded Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, a \$10,000 education grant. In recognition of Graves' support of higher education, Morgan State University, his alma mater, renamed its school of business and management the Earl G. Graves School of Business and Management. Earl "Butch" Graves, Jr., President and CEO of Black Enterprise, along with Donna Howard, Development Director at Morgan State University were presented the award by American's Chairman and CEO Doug Parker.

"We are grateful to American Airlines for making this generous gift possible, and to the diversity champions in this room today, for bringing the Earl G. Graves legacy to life through your leadership and commitment to help build a diverse, inclusive, global organization where individuals are valued and mutually respected," said Donna Howard, Development Director at Morgan State University.

The 2018 Earl G. Graves Award for Leadership in Diversity and Inclusion honorees are:

- **Alessia Giovannotti, Premium Customer Services Representative, London**
In May, Alessia assisted in starting the Professional Women in Aviation Employee Business Resource Group (EBRG) chapter in London. In just four months, the chapter has grown to more than 100 members. Her first-hand experience working in diverse locations and interacting with different cultures sparked her interest in creating a local chapter. Alessia believes diversity is a key factor in improving the work environment for team members and customers. As a Premium Customer Services Representative, her responsibility is to provide exemplary service to all customers, ensuring all their needs are met.

“Our diversity makes us unique and bringing our diverse perspectives together is what makes us strong.” — Alessia Giovannotti

- **Sonia Lopez, Reservations Manager, Lima, Peru**

Sonia has worked in the airline business for 44 years. She says that her passion for service, her respect for others and understanding that diversity can only add to the whole were imprinted in her by her parents at a very early age. Sonia's desire for equal possibilities for everybody in her community drove her to lead several projects in different parts of Peru, including providing electricity and water to a school located in a shanty town, collecting and donating unneeded spare metal aircraft parts to shops that made prosthetics for disabled children, and the construction of a dining room for Arie, a hospital for handicapped children. Sonia often quotes Francis of Assisi when asked about her endless efforts, both personally and professionally: “Start by doing what's necessary, then do what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

“It is never about you and me; it's always about us.” — Sonia Lopez

- **Syed Masood, IT Senior Project Manager, Fort Worth**

Syed understands that the important lessons of inclusion and diversity are taught in classrooms. This year, he pioneered a joint venture between his two favorite organizations: Islamic Circle of North American (ICNA) Dallas and American, and successfully executed an annual recognition program to honor the contributions of public school teachers in the DFW area. His goal is to acknowledge the value these teachers have added in the lives of the increasingly diverse students within their classrooms. Due to these collaborative efforts, ICNA Dallas recognized and awarded American as “The Best Employer” in 2016 for community engagement and outstanding efforts for inclusion and diversity.

“Inclusion means I can be completely who I am and will have the same chance to be involved in any and all levels at American. It means I don't have to change to someone else's version of me to be accepted at American.” — Syed Masood

- **Steven Sherrill, Facilities and Project Administration Manager, Fort Worth**

Steve is the primary liaison between Corporate Real Estate and Supplier Diversity. He has been involved with EBRGs since 2002, when he became a charter member of Spectrum, one of the first groups of its kind at US Airways. Since then, he has been active in the Pride EBRG, including serving as president of the DFW chapter of Pride for the past three years. Steve was recently elected to the Diversity Advisory Council as one of the global leads of the Pride EBRG. Also, he is working to establish a North Texas LGBTQ Corporate Roundtable, where local corporations collaborate to promote community service projects and mentor corporations on establishing EBRG programs.

“Embracing and celebrating the pillars of inclusion and diversity is essential to the success of any individual, team, and global organization.” — Steven Sherrill

Created in 2008, the award was named in honor of Earl G. Graves Sr., an entrepreneur, philanthropist and former member of American's Board of Directors (1995–2008). Graves personifies diversity in every sense of the word, reminding us that respecting and appreciating each other's differences is not only the right thing to do, but also a critical piece to the overall success and health of American. Graves also served as the first chairman of the Diversity Committee of the AMR Board. American Airlines recognizes two to four team members annually with the Earl G. Graves Award for their demonstration of leadership in inclusion and diversity at American and in their local community.

American's longstanding commitment to inclusion and diversity is part of the company's culture of coordinated, collaborative teamwork and mutual respect and has been recognized by diversity advocacy groups including the Human Rights Campaign, Association of ERGs & Councils, US Business Leadership Network® and American Association of People with Disabilities. For more information, please visit aa.com/diversity.

About American Airlines Group

American Airlines and American Eagle offer an average of nearly 6,700 flights per day to nearly 350 destinations in more than 50 countries. American has hubs in Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Los

Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix and Washington, D.C. American is a founding member of the **oneworld**® alliance, whose members serve more than 1,000 destinations with about 14,250 daily flights to over 150 countries. Shares of American Airlines Group Inc. trade on Nasdaq under the ticker symbol AAL. In 2015, its stock joined the S&P 500 index. Connect with American on Twitter [@AmericanAir](https://twitter.com/AmericanAir) and at Facebook.com/AmericanAirlines.

Corporate Communications

817-967-1577

mediarelations@aa.com

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