NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, INC. (NABLEO)

SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARDS CEREMONIES

Thursday, October 22, 2026 | Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale
6:00 PM - 11:30 PM



Ronnell Higgins
Keynote and Law Enforcement Leadership Award



Erik Clemons
Community Leadership Award



Ronald Huggins
Community Policing Award



Barbara Fair
Community Service Award



Rodney Williams
Community Service Award



Quintarus McArthur
Chairman's Award



Patrick Ridenhour
Chairman's Award



Gary Wallace
Chairman's Award



Daryl Roberts
Lifetime Achievement Award



London Zollarcoffer
Children of Courage Scholarship Award



Darea Vargas
Children of Courage Scholarship Award



Bertram Ettienne
Guardians Shield Award



Cherelle Carr
Guardians Keynote Award

HOSTED BY THE NEW HAVEN GUARDIANS ASSOCIATION

National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers, Inc.
P.O. Box 1182 Newark, NJ 07102
www.nableo.org

Welcome From Our Chairman, Lieut. Charles P. Wilson (Ret.)

To Our Conference Participants, Board Members, General Body, Sponsors, and Guests;



On behalf of **NABLEO**, I wish to welcome you to our 2026 Scholarship and Awards Ceremonies Banquet. I greet each of you in the spirit of love and community.

Since 2002, our organization has strived to become exactly what our motto expresses: "In the community…For the community." We have endeavored to increase and enhance the relationships between both our agencies and organizations with not only the youth, but with the businesses and those foundational organizations that have kept our community strong and resilient. And we have been steadfast in our efforts to impart worthy and wise information to our community to enable them to be better prepared to handle their sometime inappropriate encounters with those in our profession who seek to destroy the trust that has taken us so long to obtain.

This evening, we honor those individuals who, through their efforts and achievements, have epitomized the concepts that our organization has stood for since its inception, and reflect our organizational mission and values. Each has helped to make the bonds and relationships between police and community richer and stronger, particularly in communities of color. And each is deserving of the honors and distinctions that are bestowed upon them in this setting.

Our conference this week, themed "*Policing with Precision and Purpose*", has been directed towards creating the change that is needed to better support and serve the needs of our communities, regardless of their makeup; improve our relationships and bonds with those we serve; and regain the trust and confidence that is necessary and inherent to our function as guardians, between us as professionals and for those we have sworn to protect. And it has presented our attendees with an opportunity to challenge themselves to determine the officer and person that they are, want to be and ***should be***. Together we seek, both as professionals and community members, to bring about a new paradigm in the way each interacts with the other, allowing for a more transparent procedure and greater understanding of the needs and issues which inflict every community. Your generosity and commitment enables us to carry out our mission and continue providing meaningful assistance to our members and community through education, mentoring, and scholarships.

Again, I welcome all to the evening's events and festivities. My congratulations to each of our honorees and my sincere hope that each person present will become a partner in helping to improve the way policing is both provided and envisioned, so that we will truly have equal justice for all.

Amandla! Peace.

PROGRAM

Cash Bar/Reception.....6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Master of Ceremonies.....Det. Ismail Abdussabur, Pres., NHGA

Welcome.....

Introduction of Head Table/Recognition of Dignitaries.....

Invocation .....Daryl Roberts, Chaplain

Dinner

Introduction of Keynote Speaker..... Comm. Ronnell Higgins, CT. State Police

Recognition of Sponsors.....

Presentation Of Awards

Law Enforcement Leadership Award – Comm. Ronnell Higgins
Community Leadership Award – Erik Clemons
Community Policing Award – Ronald Huggins
Community Service Award – Barbara Fair
Community Service Award – Rodney Williams
Chairman's Award – Quintarus McArthur
Chairman's Award – Captain Gary Wallace
Chairman's Award – Chief Patrick Ridenhour
Lifetime Achievement Award – Chief Daryl Roberts
Children of Courage Scholarship – London Zollarcoffer
Children of Courage Scholarship- Darea Vargas
Guardian Shield Award-Asst. Chief Bertram Ettienne
Guardians Keystone Award-Sgt. Cherelle Carr

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Chairman's Closing Remarks

Lieut. Charles P. Wilson (Ret), National Chairman

Benediction .....Daryl Roberts, Chaplain

Music By.....Fat Boy Slim Group

NABLEO 2026

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, INC. (NABLEO)













































"In the community...FOR THE COMMUNITY"

NABLEO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Charles Wilson
Chairman



Crystal Williams-Coleman
Vice-Chairperson



Charina Smith
Secretary



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Leonard Randolph
National Delegate



Vincent Tilson
National
Delegate-Alternate



Daryl Roberts
Chaplain



David Daniels III
Parliamentarian



Sally Thomason
Conference
Chairperson



Matthew Fogg
Individual Member
Representative



Donald Brown
Constitution
Chairperson

Our Master of Ceremonies

DET. ISMAIL ABDUSSABUR
PRESIDENT, NEW HAVEN GUARDIAN ASSOCIATION



Ismail Abdussabur began his law enforcement career with the New Haven Police Department in 2020 during a period of significant and historic police reform. He served as a patrol officer in the Newhallville, East Rock, Cedar Hill, and Dixwell Avenue areas, in a city known for maintaining the highest calls for service in the state of Connecticut. Throughout his patrol assignment, Abdussabur conducted investigations spanning a wide range of complexity and intensity. Abdussabur is currently assigned to the Special Victim's Unit Domestic Violence Detective, where his duties are tailored to intimate partner violence, family violence, domestic assault, sex assaults, and homicides.

In addition to spending the majority of his patrol career assigned to the midnight shift, Abdussabur's additional responsibilities include being a Field Training Officer, Crowd Control Team member, Patrol Rifle Operator, and Chief Steward of his local police union. As a second-generation New Haven Police Officer and a local household name, Abdussabur's commitment to service is rooted in both family tradition and a lifelong dedication to community advocacy, fighting for the "middle man". Prior to entering law enforcement, his professional background included construction project management, engineering, personnel and building management, and real estate investment, providing him with a broad operational and leadership foundation. Abdussabur is a devoted father, husband, brother, son, and a trusted friend to many.

Shortly after joining the New Haven Police Department, he joined the New Haven Guardians. In 2025, he was elected President of The New Haven Guardians, where he expanded the organization's mission by leading large scale training efforts and facilitating numerous programs and initiatives throughout the chapter.

His most recent project includes assisting in the organizing and delivering of this year's **NABLEO** Conference, further advancing professional development and training opportunities for law enforcement personnel.

Recipient of the 2026 Law Enforcement Leadership Award and Keynote Speaker

The **Law Enforcement Leadership Award** is given to recognize one who has contributed greatly to improving the profession, instituted successful crime prevention programs, provided leadership in closing difficult criminal cases of strong community concern and providing leadership in effort.

Commissioner Ronnell Higgins



Ronnell Higgins serves as the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP). In this role, Higgins leads an agency of public servants dedicated to protecting and improving the quality of life for all by providing a broad range of public safety services, training, regulatory guidance, and scientific services, utilizing enforcement, prevention, education and state of the art science and technology. As Commissioner, Higgins brings a passion for inclusive and collaborative leadership, with the primary goal of ensuring that every voice is heard, and the citizens of Connecticut have access to necessary public safety resources.

Prior to being appointed Commissioner, Higgins served as Chief of Police and Director of Public Safety and then Associate Vice President of all Public Safety at Yale University. This crucial role centered on developing relationships and partnerships at Yale and within the greater New Haven community to ensure access to public safety resources for all. Additionally, he served as a liaison to the broader New Haven community by identifying areas where campus safety, community safety, and community engagement intersect.

While leading public safety efforts at Yale, Higgins was highly instrumental in significantly reducing crime on campus and reducing UCR crimes to their lowest levels since Yale began reporting in 1985. He developed and led numerous programs supporting excellence in on-campus safety, community policing, and deep collaborations with stakeholders, leaders, and members of both the University and City of New Haven communities while, at the same time, ensuring a leading-edge focus on efforts to reduce community violence. Additionally, he drove initiatives capitalizing on 21st century policing principles that enhanced on-campus practices, including appropriate handling of numerous high-profile situations.

Considered a principled and trusted advisor, Higgins has earned a reputation for thought leadership in on-campus policing and is recognized as a talented facilitator of greater integration (merging both the urban and the academic) and leveraging local, state, and federal resources. He has maximized the use of public safety systems, leveraging technology to achieve community safety.

His active involvement in various government and community groups has earned him recognition for his influence and unwavering dedication to his work, including being named among the "Most Influential People in Security" by Security magazine and one of the "100 Most Influential Black People in Connecticut" by the Connecticut NAACP.

Higgins received a Bachelor of Science degree in law enforcement as well as a Master of Arts degree in security studies. He firmly believes in the value of listening, learning, and leading as essential components in the pursuit of excellence in public safety and law enforcement.

Recipient of the 2026 Community Leadership Award

The **Community Leadership Award** is presented to an individual who, based on his/her activities, has made fundamental and lasting contributions to human rights and to the advancement of social, economic, and political justice for all people, serving as a model of high moral qualities or ideals, or greatness of character.

ERIK CLEMONS



Erik M. Clemons is the founding President and Chief Executive Officer of the Connecticut Center for Arts & Technology (ConnCAT), a nonprofit organization based on the model of Bill Strickland's National Center for Arts and Technology. ConnCAT is dedicated to providing job-training programs to give unemployed and under-employed youth and adults the skills needed to secure well-paying jobs in the health sciences and culinary professions. Clemons has a gift for seeing people's talents and potential and then working with them to accomplish things they did not think they were capable of doing. Through the spirit of resilience, Clemons said ConnCAT is not just about programs, "It's also about people. It is where everyone has an opportunity to be great." A lifelong Connecticut resident, Erik volunteers significant time and energy in supporting other organizations doing good work in the local community. He has devoted his career to empowering marginalized communities in New Haven and across the state of Connecticut and helping others see their own potential and power. Gateway and ConnCAT are working together to forge a partnership of a culinary arts and hospitality training program.

Clemons — the founding director of the Connecticut Center for Arts & Technology — has devoted his career to empowering marginalized communities across the state of Connecticut and helping others see their own potential and power. He is now that organization's President and Chief Executive Officer.

Prior to founding ConnCAT, Clemons served as the Connecticut Executive Director of the premier national youth development organization Leadership, Education, and Athletics in Partnership (LEAP), which provides innovative academic and social enrichment programs to youth ranging from the ages of five to 23. He has also served as Director of Vocational Training at the U.S. Department of Labor's New Haven Job Corps Center.

A lifelong Connecticut resident, Erik volunteers significant time and energy in supporting other organizations doing good work in the local community. He currently serves on numerous boards including: Cornell Scott Hill Health Center, New Haven Housing Authority, New Haven Legal Aid and CT Voices for Children.

A proud father of four daughters who are New Haven Public School graduates, Clemons is co-President of the New Haven Citywide Parent Teacher Organization and a member of the New Haven Public School Education Reform Committee.

Recipient of the 2026 Community Policing Award

The **Community Policing Award** is presented to an individual whose efforts have strongly assisted to develop and instill Community Policing as a philosophy that promotes the establishment of collaborative partnerships between law enforcement and the individuals and organizations they serve.

RONALD HUGGINS



Ronald "Huggy-Bear" Huggins is a dedicated youth services leader in New Haven, Connecticut, where he serves in a leadership role within the city's Youth and Recreation Department (YARD). His work focuses on creating meaningful opportunities for young people, including connecting them with employment programs, mentorship, and safe, structured activities. He works closely with schools, families, and community partners to ensure that city programs remain accessible, organized, and responsive to the needs of New Haven's youth.

A significant part of Huggins' work centers on planning and coordinating events across the city that bring young people and families together. He plays a key role in organizing initiatives such as Family Fun Days, youth-centered festivals, and other community gatherings that provide safe and engaging environments. These events are designed not only to offer entertainment, but also to connect residents with local resources, services, and opportunities available throughout New Haven.

Huggins is known for being actively involved in the execution of these programs and events, maintaining a visible presence in the community. He regularly engages with youth and families while working alongside local organizations to ensure events run smoothly and reach a wide audience. Through his ongoing efforts, he contributes to strengthening community connections and expanding positive opportunities for young people across the city.

Recipient of the 2026 Community Service Award

The **Community Service Award** is presented each year to an individual, corporation or organization in recognition of excellence in service to the community and for efforts on the part of the recipient through their advocacy of issues of workplace equity, abatement of police deviance, and such activities has garnered the positive confidence in the institution of policing to further strong, positive bonds and relationships between police and communities of color.

BARABARA FAIR



Barbara Fair is a lifelong resident of New Haven and a widely recognized community advocate whose work has focused on social justice, education, and reform within the criminal justice system. For decades she has been a prominent voice in Connecticut on issues related to incarceration, prison conditions, and community accountability. Born and raised in New Haven, Fair has long centered her life around family and service. She is the mother of eleven children, grandmother to thirty-four grandchildren, and great grandmother to ten. She frequently describes family as the foundation of her life and values, extending that commitment beyond her biological relatives to what she calls her community family. Her sense of responsibility to her community has shaped her lifelong dedication to helping those she believes are often unseen and unheard in society.

Fair is licensed by the Connecticut Department of Public Health as a Master's level Clinical Social Worker. Her early sense of service was rooted in her upbringing in the Baptist church, where she developed a strong commitment to helping others through faith, community involvement, and service. Over the course of her professional career she worked with children and families throughout the New Haven area and became particularly focused on improving educational access and support systems for young people.

One of the most meaningful chapters of her career came through her work in education. As a clinical social worker she established and operated a school-based health clinic within a New Haven elementary school. The clinic provided direct counseling and support services for students and families and helped address social, emotional, and behavioral needs that often interfered with learning. Fair has often described this work with children and families as the most rewarding experience of her professional life.

Over time, after witnessing what she believed were abuses of power and systemic problems within policing and correctional systems, Fair turned much of her advocacy toward efforts aimed at transforming those institutions. She was selected by former New Haven mayor Toni Harp to serve on the city's Police Community Task Force. In that role she worked with community leaders, residents, and law enforcement representatives to address tensions between police and the community and to explore ways to improve transparency, accountability, and trust.

Fair later became a leading advocate for criminal justice reform throughout Connecticut, particularly around the treatment of incarcerated people. Her work has included legislative advocacy, policy reform efforts, and public education campaigns focused on creating what she describes as a more just, humane, and rehabilitative correctional system. Among her most significant advocacy efforts was championing the closure of Connecticut's only supermaximum security prison after the facility was cited by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture as a location where incarcerated people experienced conditions considered abusive and inhumane.

Beyond policy work, Fair remains deeply committed to educating and mobilizing families affected by incarceration. She regularly hosts community engagement meetings where families can learn about conditions inside correctional facilities, understand proposed legislation and policy changes, and become involved in advocacy efforts aimed at improving the treatment of incarcerated individuals.
Through decades of social work, community leadership, and public advocacy, Barbara Fair has become one of Connecticut's most recognized voices in the movement for criminal justice reform. Her work reflects a lifelong commitment to service, to her community, and to the belief that dignity, fairness, and humane treatment should remain central to any justice system.

Recipient of the 2026 Community Service Award

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RODNEY WILLIAMS



Rodney Williams is a longtime community advocate, entrepreneur, and mentor whose work has focused on strengthening neighborhoods, expanding economic opportunity, and uplifting underserved communities throughout New Haven. Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1966, Williams moved to New Haven in 1976 and has spent most of his life serving the city he proudly calls home. He comes from a large family and is the 11th of 14 children born to his mother, Hattie Ruth Williams, and one of 11 children born to his father, Timothy Williams. Though both of his parents are now deceased, Williams credits them with instilling in him the values of perseverance, hard work, and service to others that continue to guide his life and community work.

Throughout his adult life, Williams has combined entrepreneurship with community service. As the owner of Mr. Rock Drywall, Right Way Landscaping, and Green Elm Construction, he has employed hundreds of New Haven residents over the years, helping create jobs and economic opportunity for individuals and families throughout the city. Through these businesses he has also helped provide hands on work experience and opportunities for young people seeking to build skills and stable careers.

Williams has also remained deeply involved in civic leadership and community advocacy. He served as Ward 21 Co Chair for four years and as Vice Chair of the Dixwell Management Team for more than two years, helping address neighborhood concerns and improve local engagement. At the state level he served on Connecticut's Commission on Economic Competitiveness, contributing to conversations focused on workforce development and expanding economic opportunity. He has also worked alongside civil rights leader Boise Kimber advocating for the well-being of residents across New Haven and has been a strong voice for greater diversity and representation within the New Haven Police Department.

In addition to his advocacy work, Williams has played an active role in strengthening relationships between residents and city leadership. He was appointed by former New Haven Mayor Toni Harp to serve on the city's Police and Community Relations Task Force, where he worked with community leaders, city officials, and law enforcement representatives to improve communication and build trust. He also helped organize the distribution of more than 100,000 protective masks to residents across New Haven, particularly in housing complexes and neighborhoods most heavily impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic.

Continuing his commitment to youth mentorship and community development, Williams founded the nonprofit Rescuing Our Community Kids, an organization focused on mentoring young people and creating positive pathways through guidance, opportunity, and community support. Through the program he works directly with youth and families, offering mentorship, encouragement, and exposure to constructive opportunities that help young people make positive choices. Most recently, Williams has launched a community initiative aimed at addressing the rise in motor vehicle thefts in New Haven.

Recipient of the 2026 Chairman's Award

The **Chairman's Award** is presented to a member of the national body or an organization in recognition of the recipient's patience, perseverance and desire for the improvement of the national body, and for their awareness of and attention to issues and concerns that impact the quality of service to both its community and membership.

QUINTARUS MCARTHUR



Quintarus McArthur better known as "Q" was born and raised in New Haven, CT. Quinn is the proud father of 6. He attended New Haven and Hamden Public School. After graduating High school "Q" attended Briarwood College where he obtained an associate's degree in mortuary services in 1998. In the year 2000 he chose to protect and serve by joining New Haven Police Department.

Throughout his 22-year career with NHPD he worked in narcotics, street interdiction, patrol. He became certified as a peer support officer, crisis intervention officer, domestic violence unit officer, field training officer. "Q" is a founding member, past president, and treasure of the New Haven Guardians.

After retiring in 2022 he took a break for a short period of time before going to back to work. In 2023 "Q" started working for Project Longevity. As the New Haven Project Manager, he has helped guide formerly incarcerated clients back into society. "Q" helps his client by assisting them with basic needs, vocational training, finical literacy, housing, and connecting them to additional to social services to aide them in a successful transition back into society.

Quinn is involved in serval organizations throughout his community. Quinn is an active member of Oriental Lodge #6, Prince Hall Mason 32 degree., Prince Hall Shriners Arabic temple#40, East Rock Lodge #141 Improved Benevolent Protective Order Elks of the World, Gillison Council #75, I.B.P.O Elks National Grand Lodge Commissioner of Security.

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CAPTAIN GARY WALLACE



Gary Wallace is from East Hampton, CT. He attended Mitchell College in New London CT where he majored in business administration before joining the United States Navy in 1991. As an Operations Specialist, Gary was responsible for radar detection and tracking of aircraft and surface ships. He was discharged honorably with numerous awards and medals, specifically during the Gulf War on board the USS John F. Kennedy aircraft carrier. Gary joined the Middletown Police Department in 1994. He was selected for numerous assignments including school resource officer, field training officer, patrol sergeant, patrol lieutenant, internal affairs supervisor, and eventually the captain overseeing investigative services.

Throughout his career spanning 26 years, Gary also served on many community boards and committees in his community. Middlesex Health, the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, the Connection, the Middlesex United Way, Middlesex NAACP, the Middletown Military Museum, Oak Hill, the Middletown Commission on the Arts, and he leads the CT Chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives as the current Connecticut chapter president. From 2020 to 2025, Gary worked for the Community Health Center home based out of Middletown, but he worked across the state of CT through the 16 other health centers and communities as the Director of Community Engagement. He left CHC in 2025 and began working for the CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence as the Vice President of Programs overseeing Law Enforcement Services, Legal Advocacy, and the Training Institute. His current role spans across the state working with law enforcement agencies, domestic violence advocates, and court officials to bring cutting edge training, best practices for investigating DV cases, and collaboration among agencies.

In his spare time, Gary is finishing is MBA at the University of Connecticut (Fall '26) He is also an avid drummer playing the snare drum with the Middletown PBA Pipes and Drums bagpipe band. He is married to his beautiful wife Karina of five years and they share four children together. Gary and family reside in Middletown, CT.

Recipient of the 2026 Chairman's Award

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CHIEF PATRICK RIDENHOUR



Patrick Ridenhour serves as Chief of Police in the City of Danbury, the seventh largest municipality in Connecticut. He began his policing career in 1988 with the Waterbury, CT Police Department, the city where he was born and raised. He initially served in the patrol division and crime apprehension and prevention unit. He was promoted to Sergeant in February 1997 and Lieutenant in March 2000. In May 2004 he became the first African-American in the Waterbury Police Department to ascend to the rank of Captain. In 2005 he began serving as the Acting Chief Inspector before becoming the first African-American promoted to Assistant Deputy Chief in January 2007, serving as the commander of all of the department's uniformed services. He retired in 2008 and began working in the Waterbury Public School system for the 2008-2009 school year.

He returned to policing in June 2009, after his selection as the new Deputy Police Chief for the Town of Stratford, CT, the first African-American to hold the position. While serving in this position, he oversaw the daily operations of the entire department, including patrol, investigations, professional standards, and administration. In April 2011 he began serving as the interim Chief, and in March 2013 he was installed as the first African-American Police Chief in the town's history. During his tenure he increased community outreach, re-established the Police Activities League (PAL), increased professional development opportunities for personnel, and stabilized labor relations in addition to reducing overall crime by more than 35 percent. He also served as a mentor in the Stratford Public Schools.

In July 2016 he became the first African-American Chief of the Danbury Police Department. He continues to focus on building and maintaining positive police-community relations through a variety of outreach initiatives, personnel development, technology advancements, and other crime reduction strategies. Danbury is consistently one of the safest cities of its size in the region. It is also considered the most culturally, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse city in Connecticut. Recruitment and retention efforts during his tenure have made the makeup of the department much more reflective of the diverse community.

Chief Ridenhour holds a Certificate in Criminal Justice Education from the University of Virginia, a Bachelor's Degree from Charter Oak State College in New Britain, CT, and a Master's Degree in Organizational Management and Leadership from Springfield College in Springfield, MA. A graduate of the 212th Session of the FBI National Academy and the 74th Session of the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar, both in Quantico, VA, he is a charter member of the CT Chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), where he has served on the Executive Board since the chapter was established in 2010. A past president of the CT Police Chiefs Association, the first African-American to hold the position, he has served on several local and national committees focused on contemporary issues in policing. Serving as a member or Board member of several community-based organizations, including the Danbury Lions Club, the Community Action Agency of Western CT, and the Danbury Police Activities League (PAL), he has been recognized for his volunteer work as well as his accomplishments by numerous professional and civic organizations statewide. Chief Ridenhour resides in Danbury with his wife, Kelly. Together they have five adult children and three grandchildren.

Recipient of the 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** is presented to a member of the national body in honor of the recipient's dedication, efforts, service and visionary guidance in being a catalyst for the improvement of the national body which has brought about significant change in the quality of service to both its community and membership.

CHIEF DARYL ROBERTS



Hartford Police Chief (ret.), Daryl K. Roberts was born and raised in the city of Hartford, CT., and spent thirty (30) years serving the capital city of Connecticut with the Hartford Police Department. He is the only Chief born and raised in the city. Chief Roberts began his career as a Patrol Officer in 1982. He moved up through the ranks and commanded every major division. He is a recipient of the Chief's Medal of Valor, the highest honor bestowed to a member of the Hartford Police Department. Chief Roberts also earned three (3) Distinguished Service Medals, six (6) Exemplary Service Medals, and a Merit Award. He was the recipient of the **National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officer, Inc. (NABLEO),** 2021 Law Enforcement Leadership Award. He also was inducted into the Bulkely Hall of Fame in 2023, known as being the "speed cop." Chief Roberts served with the Hartford Police Department's Honor Guard and the Department's Emergency Response Team. He is a lifetime member of the Connecticut Police Chief's Association.

Chief Roberts is the past President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, Connecticut Chapter (NOBLE, CT), and is a lifetime member of the NAACP. Upon his retirement from the Hartford Police Department, he served the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC): Public Safety Academy (now known as the Civic Leadership High School), as the Director of the School of Law Enforcement. He currently serves with Hartford Public Schools (HPS) as the Director of Safety and Security.

Chief Roberts is married to his lovely wife (Donna), and has three (3) beautiful daughters, three (3) wonderful grandchildren, and three (3) great children. He is a deacon at St. John's Full Gospel Deliverance Church. His hobbies are exercising and reading. He is also an avid chess player.

Recipient of the 2026 Children of Courage Scholarship Award

The **"Children of Courage" Scholarship Award** is aimed at improving the relationship between law enforcement agencies and the youth of the communities of color that they serve. This program seeks to enhance higher education opportunities among qualified high school graduates, providing a financial award that will afford students the opportunity to have higher educational training in the academics of law enforcement or other related areas for the betterment of the Criminal Justice System.

LONDON ZOLLARCOFFER



London Zollarcoffer is a 17-year-old from New Haven, Connecticut, where she was born and raised. She grew up in a single-parent household, guided by her mother, who played a pivotal role in shaping her character and values. Despite living in another state, her father remained an active and meaningful presence in her life until his passing in 2021 due to COVID-19. This loss had a profound impact on London, but she has demonstrated resilience by channeling her grief into motivation, honoring his memory through her achievements and her commitment to making both of her parents proud.

London is actively involved in her community through her work with the Police Athletic League (PAL), where she serves as a summer camp counselor for 10-year-old children. In this role, she provides guidance, supervision, and support, ensuring a safe and engaging environment while fostering positive experiences for youth. She also participates in PAL events throughout the year, reflecting her dedication to community involvement and leadership development.

As she continues her academic journey, London plans to attend the University of New Haven, where she intends to pursue a degree in dental hygiene. Her long-term goal is to become a registered dental hygienist, combining her passion for healthcare with her desire to serve others. She also intends to maintain a lasting connection to her hometown, remaining actively engaged with the children she mentors and supporting the public servants who work to strengthen and uplift her community.

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DAREA VARGAS



Darea Vargas is a senior at Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School, with a 3.5 GPA studying the art of creative writing.

She is a dedicated Tack and Field student athlete for James Hillhouse High School. Over the course of her High school athletic career, she has earned five state championships for both the indoor and outdoor season and competed at The Nike and New Balance national championships in years 2023 and 2024. Through Track and Field she has developed skills that go beyond the physical such as determination, consistency, and teamwork. These skills are vital to ensure a successful adulthood.

She aspires to attend the University of New Haven to Major in Criminal Justice, with the goal of becoming an FBI agent. Being a FBI agent stems from her desire to bring justice and due process to multiple families along with personal losses she has experienced throughout her life. She cares deeply about others wellbeing and takes pride in supporting her community. This career pathway allows her to encourage law and order while also ensuring the safety and security of others.

Recipient of the 2026 Guardian Shield Award

The **Guardian Shield Award** is awarded to a New Haven Guardians member, past or present, whose actions reflect outstanding leadership, professional excellence, and a measurable impact that strengthens and advances the mission of the organization.

ASST. CHIEF BERTRAM ETTIENNE



Bertram N. Ettienne was born and raised in the City of Hartford, Connecticut. He graduated from Bulkeley High School located in Hartford, CT, in 1995, and is an alumnus of Trinity College Upward Bound Program. He received his Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Albertus Magnus College, and is currently enrolled in the graduate program. Becoming a police officer was a childhood dream of his; he is the son of a retired Hartford Police Department Lieutenant and the grandson of a Sub-Inspector of Police in the island of Trinidad & Tobago.

In August 2001, Bertram entered the New Haven Police Department Police Training Academy, and during that time, he was appointed as a class leader. He began his career in the Uniformed Services Division as a Patrol Officer, working in the Beaver Hill and Fair Haven sections of the city. As a patrol officer, he worked on temporary assignments in the Street Interdiction Unit, Internal Affairs Unit-Background Investigations, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (D.E.A) Task Force.

In 2008, he was promoted to the rank of Police Detective and assigned to the General Investigations Unit in the Investigative Services Division. The Investigative Services Division would give him the challenge he was missing in the Uniformed Services Division. Some of his assignments have included robbery/burglary, assaults, fatal evading accidents, non-fatal firearm assaults, suspicious deaths, and homicides. Throughout Bertram's investigative career, his most rewarding experiences were as a homicide detective bringing closure to survivors of homicides through murder arrests, which led to convictions in the court of law.

In 2010, Bertram lost his younger sister to gun violence in the City of Hartford, CT. She was the mother of two girls, ages 4 and 7. Bertram legally adopted his nieces, and he raised them along with his biological daughter. Being a single father of three young women now, 19, 20, and 22, has matured Bertram immensely in his personal life and professional career. His tragic loss has made him more passionate about solving violent crime and more compassionate, sympathetic, and empathetic when dealing with victims of violent crime and survivors of homicides.

In 2017, he was promoted to the rank of Police Sergeant and assigned to the Investigative Services Division. He supervised detectives in the Major Crimes Unit. Then, in July of 2019, he was appointed Officer in Charge (O.I.C.) of the Investigative Services Division, where he served as the commanding officer until April of 2021. He was responsible for coordinating, developing, and reviewing criminal investigations, bureau operations, and the supervision and evaluation of assigned personnel.

In July 2022, Bertram was appointed to the rank of Assistant Chief of Police. The Investigative Services Division, Training Division, Internal Affairs Unit, and the Background Unit were under his command. In January 2025, Bertram assumed command of the Uniformed Services Division.

Bertram has been a member of the New Haven Police Department Honor Guard Unit in various capacities since 2002. He has received letters of accommodation; the Officer of the Month award, the Medal of Valor, the Courage of Connecticut Law Enforcement award, and City of New Haven Altermatic citations. In November 2005, he was featured in the New Haven Independent as "Cop of the Week." In 2006, he was featured as "Rookie" in the short film "Know Me," produced by Youth Rights Media. He is a former member of the New Haven Silver Shields, a founder/former member of the New Haven Guardians, and one of the first members of the New Haven Police Department Peer Support Team. He is a member of the University of New Haven, Tow Youth Justice Institute Cohort 10.

Recipient of the 2026 Guardian Keystone Award

The **Guardian Keystone Award** is awarded to a New Haven Guardians member, past or present, for their commitment to the organization and outstanding work in the police department and the community

SGT. CHERELLE CARR



Cherelle D. Carr was born and raised in the City of New Haven and is currently still a resident. She graduated from Hill Regional Career High School located in New Haven, CT in 2007. In 2011, Cherelle received her Bachelors of Science in Criminal Justice from Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT. After graduating from college Cherelle knew that she wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement.

In 2012, Cherelle joined the New Haven Police Department where she served as a Patrol Officer. In 2016, she was promoted to detective and joined the Family Services Division. She was eager to be a part of the Family Services Division where she investigated risk of injury complaints, sexual assault, child abuse cases, and missing person reports. In 2022 Cherelle was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. During that time she worked in patrol as well as the Internal Affairs Investigative Unit. She is currently the Supervisor of the Family Services division. She works closely as the liaison to improve domestic violence cases and investigate serious complaints related to domestic violence, abuse of child (risk of injury complainants), missing persons, sexual assault, and human trafficking.

Cherelle has been a great influence in various communities within the city of New Haven. She has created and facilitated a mentorship program with Sergeant Shirley Connor from East Haven, CT called S.T.A.R.S. (Focus prevention of human trafficking, targeting young runaways)

Cherelle is elated to hold two memberships relating to her career in law enforcement. She is a member of the National Association of the Black Law Enforcement Officers (NABLEO). As well, as a member of the New Haven Guardians Inc., which is a fraternity of New Haven Police Officers dedicated to bridging the gap between the New Haven community and police.

Cherelle has received many awards and acclamations for acts of heroism as a New Haven Police officer. It is her passion and love for her community that has kept her motivated and focused within her career. Cherelle understands the importance in serving underserved communities being that she was raised in a city project housing development. It is extremely important for her to remain connected to the community and to continue to lead community service projects through the New Haven Guardians.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide community-based solutions to policing issues which have a direct impact on communities of color and the pivotal roles that African American, Latino, and other criminal justice practitioners of color play. We do this through various programs designed to empower youth, enhance the professional, career and personal training of our membership and others in our profession, improve the quality of life in poor and low-income communities, and strengthen the bonds between community members and their law enforcement guardians. Our tools for success include: opportunities to expose youth to the criminal justice field, training conferences for law enforcement and community members, member advocacy sessions, and various other endeavors.

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Remembering Those We Have Lost (2025-2026)

In Our Lord God lies our Strength, for who but He can know our weaknesses. In His Omnipotence and Great Wisdom, He has called unto Him our brothers and sisters, that they may finally know peace. We pay Honor and Homage to those who have gone before us, in the full knowledge and belief that theirs is now a better existence, and that we shall someday meet again in that Sweet By and By.

Sheila Rose Smith	Kenneth Smith	Alfred Lima Jr	Avelino Rose
Malik Baker	William Baxter	Errol Dowman	Christopher Hill
Theodore Lewis	Leonard Shand	Thomas Traylor	David Melvin
Raymond Armstead	Harold Follins	GMalik Merritt	Kevin Bradford
Alhassane Barry	Tao Graves		

Inspiring Words

We hope that these words will encourage you to move strongly forward in your efforts to support and safeguard the communities you serve, for they are deserving of your guardianship, not a warlike attitude.

“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made.”

Nelson Mandela

“Where you see wrong or inequality or injustice; speak out, because this is your country, this is your democracy, make it, protect it, pass it on.”

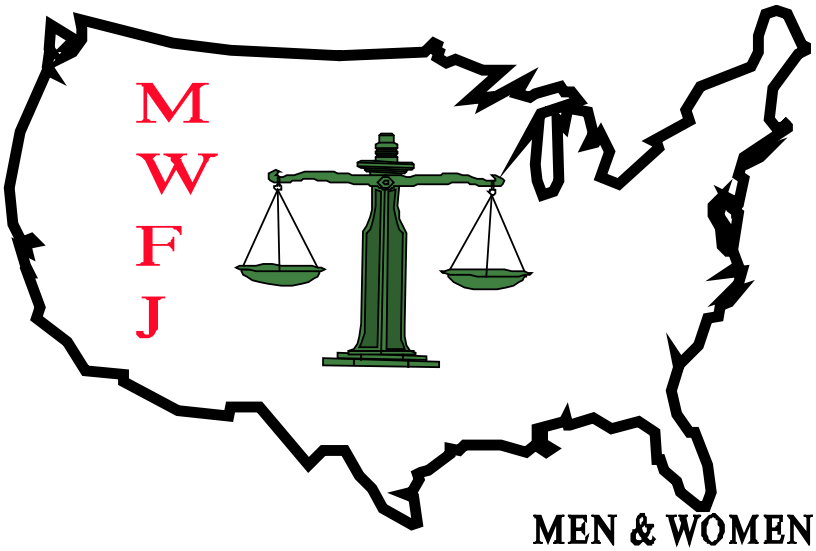
Thurgood Marshall

“When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to do something.”

U.S. Rep. John Lewis

“We may not be in control of those who commit evil acts, but we are in control of how we respond to it”

Rev. Nelson Goff



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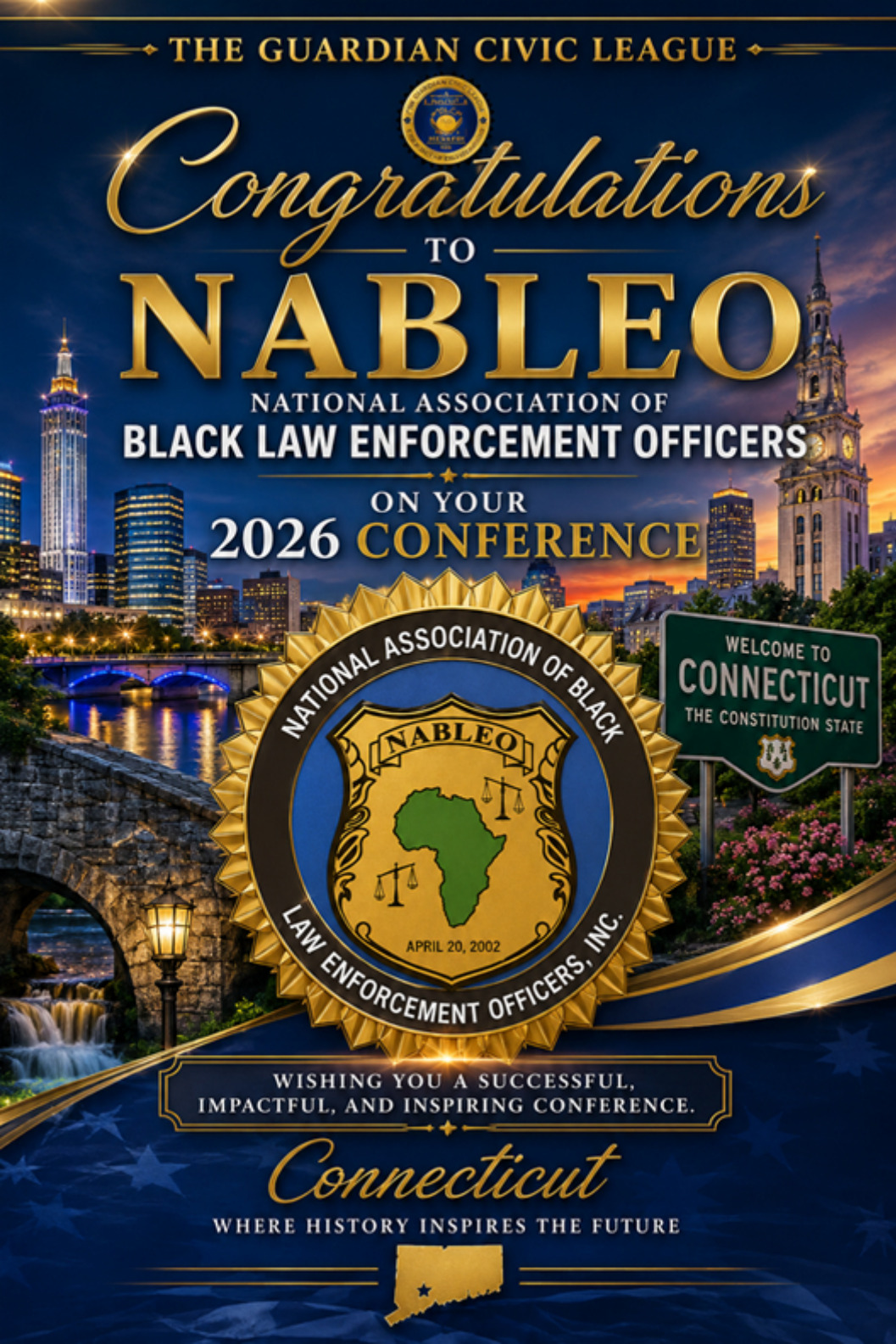
Sally Thomason, Mark Odom, Swannetta Pitt, Kenneth Ford, Leonard Randolph, Val Littles, Janie Hankerson, Trish Littles-Floyd, Cory Floyd, Patricia Royster, Adel Johnson, Mae Smith

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"In the Community-For the Community"

Congratulations

NABLEO

The New Haven Guardians Association

And

The 2026 Award Recipients

Commissioner Ronnell Higgins - Law Enforcement Leadership Award

Erik Clemons - Community Leadership Award

Ronald Huggins - Community Policing Award

Barbara Fair - Community Service Award

Rodney Williams - Community Service Award

Quintarus McArthur - Chairman's Award

Captain Gary Wallace - Chairman's Award

Chief Patrick Ridenhour - Chairman's Award

Chief Daryl Roberts - Lifetime Achievement Award

London Zollarcoffer - Children of Courage Scholarship Award

Darea Vargas - Children of Courage Scholarship Award

Asst. Chief Bertram Ettienne - Guardian Shield Award

MAY YOUR CONTINUED WORK INSPIRE POSITIVE CHANGE AND LEAVE A LASTING IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITIES YOU SERVE!

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Hartford Police Chief (Ret.) Daryl K. Roberts

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Congratulations to all Scholarship & Awards honorees. Your leadership inspires us to serve with the same integrity and compassion.



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NOTES

CLEARING THE AIR

Harm Reduction & the Illicit Market

Well-intentioned tobacco control policies are producing an illicit marketplace that undermines both public health and community safety. Nicotine consumers are acutely price-sensitive.

When the cost of legal alternatives rises, or those alternatives are banned entirely, many turn to illicit products that carry greater health risks and funnel revenue to criminal enterprises, including drug trafficking organizations.

This panel brings together criminal justice professionals to examine how harm reduction frameworks that preserve access to reduced-risk alternatives like e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches, and vapor products — regulated and taxed proportionally to their risk profile rather than banned or prohibitively taxed — and strategic enforcement strategies can simultaneously advance cessation goals, protect tax revenue, and relieve law enforcement of the burden of policing markets that prohibition and punitive taxation inevitably create.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21 | 1 PM



Sherman Lea

MODERATOR

Former President of the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice (NABCJ)

ELLIOT T. BOYCE, SR.



Principal & President of Diverse Perspective; Director, New York State Police (EAP) (Ret.)

COREY PEGUES



Host of "Corey Corner Podcast," and Author, Speaker, Community Leader; NYPD Deputy (Ret.)

DAVID DANIELS, III



Award-winning Author of "Black And Blue in Bridgeport"; Bridgeport Police Department , Lieutenant (Ret.)

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