

Greenville Chamber Names Diversity Award Winners

By Jennifer Oladipo | senior business writer

THOSE WHO HELP FOSTER DIVERSITY in the Upstate were honored Thursday, April 23, at the Greenville Chamber's ninth annual Upstate Diversity Leadership Awards Dinner.

"The Greenville Chamber is proud to partner with the Riley Institute at Furman and local chambers to honor those in the Upstate who are making great strides to cultivate an inclusive community," said Nika White, vice president of diversity and inclusion for the Greenville Chamber. "This event joins together organizations and individuals who have a common desire to promote and celebrate diversity, and we hope it will continue to inspire others in the community to foster diversity efforts in their capacity."

The event was presented by Bon Secours St. Francis Health System and hosted by the Greenville Chamber and the Riley Institute at Furman, in partnership with the Anderson, Greer, Simpsonville and Spartanburg Chambers.

The winners and some of their accomplishments include:

K-12 School: William "Bill" T. Wylie-Valued Lives Award for

School Excellence in Diversity: Merrywood Elementary School, for programs encouraging high academic achievement and focusing on at-risk youth

Outstanding High School Student Award: Bremond "Bre" Byrd, a junior at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, for active community involvement including the Battered Women's Shelter, Artisphere, Warehouse Theater and other organizations.

Outstanding College Student Award: Alyssa Gillis, a 2013 graduate of Furman University who actively promoted diversity both on and off campus during her tenure.

Outstanding Nonprofit Organization Award: Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, for promoting social justice and advocating education and awareness through programs such as Senior Services, Black History Month Dialogue and Celebration Series and a partnership with the Hispanic Alliance to increase awareness and access to healthcare services for the Hispanic Community.



David Esch



Marie Majorais Smith

Outstanding Business Award: TD Bank, named one of the Top 50 Companies for Diversity by DiversityInc magazine this year, for launching the Metro Carolinas Regional Diversity Council, a focused diversity initiative concentrated on the Carolinas.

Outstanding Contribution to International Diversity Award: David Esch, formerly with the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development; recognized for his involve-

ment with the International Center of the Upstate and a lasting impact on the international movement in the Upstate.

Calder D. Ehrmann Outstanding Individual Award: Marie Majorais Smith, program manager and bilingual victim advocate for the South Carolina Immigrant Victim Network and provider of cultural competency training to other service providers and law enforcement around the state.