

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 9/12/2019

Contact:

Heidi Holliday, Executive Director, Consensus - 785-224-4344

Kim Gile, Civility Awards Committee Chair, 913-244-2801

Honoring those who build bridges
Consensus announces 2019 Civility Award winners

Consensus, a Kansas City based nonprofit organization, is excited to announce the recipients of the 2019 Civility Awards, which are given to people, organizations, and businesses for bridging the chasms that often divide us. The award winners will be honored at the 2019 Civility Awards Breakfast on Friday, November 8, from 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. at Grand Street Cafe, 4740 Grand Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64112.

“We are so excited to have such a year of growth for Consensus. It is fitting that we celebrate our 35th year as an organization and get to honor individuals and organizations of such caliber in our region,” remarked Kim Gile, Past President and Chair of the Civility Awards Committee.

The 2019 award winners are:

- [Crescent Peace Society](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of different Muslim cultures. Its mission is to build bridges among faith communities, encourage dialogue, and promote justice and mutual understanding. Nominated by Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director of Kansas Interfaith Action.
- KC Common Good, an initiative of [American Public Square at Jewell](#), was founded to give all 2.2 million members of the Greater Kansas City community a path forward toward hope, opportunity and a successful future. The initiative was based on the knowledge of an existential problem plaguing the Metropolitan Region: Too much crime and violence leading to too many deaths by homicide and suicide. KC Common Good began with a listening tour and community forums and has evolved into a multisectoral effort to develop a Community Resources Platform, due to launch in 2020. Nominated by Alana Muller, Community Development Director at American Public Square.
- [Shirley's Kitchen Cabinet](#), a nonprofit, non-partisan organization dedicated to amplifying the voices and power of Black women through education and advocacy, so they can be effective advocates for the issues that matter to them and the communities they serve. Nominated by Lauren Conaway, CEO of InnovateHER KC and Tracy Hull, Manager of Civic Engagement and Highest Awards at Girl Scouts of NE Kansas and NW Missouri.

- [Sarah Smarsh](#), a Kansas-based journalist who has covered socioeconomic class, politics and public policy for *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* and many other publications. Her first book, *Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth*, was a finalist for the National Book Award. A 2018 research fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, Smarsh is a frequent speaker and commentator on economic inequality. She is host and executive producer of *The Homecomers*, a new podcast series featuring rural and working-class community advocates across the U.S. Nominated by Kendra Bozarth, Communications Manager for The Homecomers with Sarah Smarsh.
- Dr. Tiffany Willis, a pediatric psychologist at [Children's Mercy Hospital](#), has dedicated her life to health equity. She provides therapy and assessment for babies, as well as support for parents who are processing trauma and loss. She also founded Birthing Hope, a support group designed to reach minority parents by meeting them where they are, in their own communities, a less intimidating environment. She has led Diversity and Equity efforts throughout Children's Mercy, is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Missouri Kansas City School of Medicine, and is an active community volunteer. Nominated by Erica Forrest of Thermo Fisher Scientific.

"At Consensus, one of our core values is the commitment to civility. Civility, to us, doesn't merely mean playing nice. It means working in our communities to tackle the big issues we face, while doing so with respect, integrity, engagement and inclusivity. The 2019 Civility Awards Breakfast is the premier awards program that celebrates those dedicated to this mission," said Consensus Board President Michael Knabel.

Consensus is a nonprofit organization that improves public policy by giving the public a meaningful voice in decision-making. The organization was founded in 1984, and launched the Civility Project in 2009 as a response to the health care town hall meetings, which reduced civility in public life. Since then, the organization has devoted itself to raising awareness of how to engage people in ways that bring out the best in them through well-designed public meetings, and through awards for people who put principles of civility into practice. Tickets are \$50 or \$400 for a table of eight, and are available at <http://2019civilityawards.eventbrite.com>.