Dr. Aaron Shirley, Pioneer of Rural Health Care in Mississippi, Receives NCIV’s Citizen Diplomat Award

Dr. Aaron Shirley, a dedicated community activist and pioneer of rural health care in Mississippi, received National Council for International Visitors Citizen Diplomat Award. The award honors individuals or institutions for their outstanding achievements in furthering the cause of international understanding and global engagement. NCIV member organization, the International Visitors Center of Jackson (IVCJ) nominated Dr. Shirley for the honor, and Sara Williams, Program Officer at IVCJ, was on hand to introduce him. Alexander P. Durtka, Jr., Chair of NCIV’s Board of Directors, presented the Citizen Diplomat award to Dr. Shirley during the concluding luncheon of NCIV’s National Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Shirley was recognized for his work establishing health houses in the Mississippi Delta using a model for healthcare delivery pioneered in Iran. His work shows how a passion for change in concert with a high-impact exchange program can make a profound difference in people’s lives.

In 2008, Dr. Shirley teamed up with Dr. James Miller and Dr. Mohammad Shabazi to implement the “rural health house” model that Dr. Miller discovered in Iran while on a professional exchange program. Learning from Iranian doctors, the three established a series of exchanges and a partnership with Shiraz University. This led Dr. Shirley to create the HealthConnect group in 2010, consisting of 11 school-based community health centers across the Mississippi Delta aimed at reducing health disparities among poor and rural populations.

NCIV President Jennifer Clinton said, “Dr. Shirley is a shining example of how each citizen can become a catalyst for global change and transform entire communities for the better. His personal commitment to solving our toughest challenges and openness to looking beyond our borders for solutions illustrate the positive impact international exchanges have not just abroad but here at home.”

Success is a welcomed gift for the uninhibited mind.

Adlin Sinclair
IVCJ Welcomes New Members to Board of Directors

Pictured left to right:
1st Row: Dr. Patricia Jernigan, Interim Dean, JSU International Studies; Dr. Richard Meyer, Professor, Mississippi College Law School;
2nd Row: Dr. Warren Yoder; Director, Public Policy Center; Ms. Debbie Raddin, Marketing Specialist, Forestry Suppliers; Mr. Earl Burke, CFO, Hinds County Public Schools;
3rd Row: Mr. Tyrone Hendrix, Hendrix & Dometz; Mrs. Sweyn Simrall, The Nowell Agency; Dr. Kenneth Butler, Professor, University Medical Center
The Language and Cultural Center

LCC is an important part of International Studies at Jackson State University (JSU). The LCC engages students through teaching and learning, international partnerships, and celebration of diversity, regarding English as a Second Language Institute, Fulbright programming and representation, study abroad and China Initiatives are the crux of meeting the need to diversify the Jackson State University learning community. Currently, efforts are geared toward more innovative teaching and learning techniques such as web-based instruction and the development of a certification program. The objective is to engage participants from around the world in an English acquisition sequence that allows students to matriculate into enrollment in JSU postsecondary programming. JSU is home to 282 international students and 71 scholars. International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) offers a variety of services to the international community of JSU. The assistance ISSS provides to international students and scholars is holistic in nature. Services range from assistance in applying, enrolling and maintaining their legal status while at JSU. ISSS serves as an advocate for the unique needs of international students as well as promotion of diversity, and cultural and academic contributions of the international community.

Sara Williams and Debbie Raddin Serve Up Southern Hospitality

Sara Williams, IVCJ Program officer, and Debbie Raddin, board member attended the week-long Network, D.C. meeting along with Irene Bailey, Deputy Director, Georgia Council for International Visitors (GCIV) and Dineo Brinson, volunteer for the GCIV. The two state councils visited all national program agencies in addition to the U.S. Department of State. Their visit has provided new program opportunities for the Mississippi and Georgia International Visitors Centers. Thank you, you're the best, way to go!!!!

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• Provide overnight accommodations for international visitors.

Local Guide
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