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Woods Hole Diversity Initiative Announces 2014 Recipient of the John K. Bullard Diversity Award: Lionel Hall

Longtime MBL employee Lionel Hall has been selected as the 2014 recipient of The John K. Bullard Diversity Award, given every other year to an individual in the Woods Hole community who plays a significant role in making the community more inclusive and more welcoming of people of all backgrounds.

The award is named in honor for John Bullard, former president of the Sea Education Association, who was presented the first award in 2012 for his leadership, vision, and commitment to diversity in the Woods Hole science community and for his role in forming the Woods Hole Diversity Initiative and serving on the Woods Hole Diversity Advisory Committee.

The John K. Bullard Diversity Award will be presented by the Woods Hole Diversity Initiative to Lionel Hall on June 19 during Juneteenth celebration events at the MBL. Activities begin at noon in Speck Auditorium, Rowe Laboratory, on the corner of Water and MBL Streets at 10 MBL Street, Woods Hole.

Hall, purchasing supervisor at the Marine Biological Laboratory, was recognized for his efforts at the MBL, in the village of Woods Hole, and in Falmouth over the past 30 years to make Woods Hole a welcoming and inclusive community. Hall began working in the Woods Hole science community in 1985, initially in the warehouse at the US Geological Survey. In 1986 he moved to the MBL as a shipping and receiving clerk. He was promoted to Purchasing Supervisor in 1998, and in 2004 assumed responsibility for the MBL Chemical Stockroom.

Hall joined the Woods Hole Black History Month Organizing Committee in the 1990s and has been chair of that committee since 1999. Since 1979, the committee has brought more than 100 individuals from a variety of fields to the village as speakers on an array of topics, and also organizes social events, including the annual harambee or ethnic feast.

William Reznikoff, director of education at the MBL, said there are several things that make Lionel Hall a key member of the MBL community. "Ask anyone at the MBL and they will tell you that Lionel is the smiling, friendly, helpful professional person who makes it his goal to help us with our needs. He has developed and led both the purchasing department and the stock room to a caliber of performance that is not seen in many much larger institutions."

“Lionel has also been a leader in our diversity efforts; his leadership extends beyond the MBL to encompass the whole town,” said Reznikoff, who is chair of the Woods Hole Diversity Initiative.

Outside of Woods Hole, Hall has worked to support, encourage, and mentor Cape Cod youth. He is an active member of the Concerned Black Men of Cape Cod, a national mentoring organization, and has participated in “Bright Futures,” an education and social program for Falmouth youth offered in collaboration with the Falmouth school system. Hall has also participated in projects to clean up rental properties, build a handicap accessible playground at Teaticket Elementary School, clean up the local skateboard park, and encourage children of color to participate in summer programs offered by the Town of Falmouth’s Recreation Department.

“Lionel Hall has made a career of supporting others,” noted one nomination. “Although he is not the CEO of a Woods Hole science institution, he has made a difference in our community. The Bullard Award description speaks of honoring individuals who carry on in John Bullard’s tradition - individuals whose lives and actions are guided by the belief that diversity is a key component of excellence, and that our community is stronger when it is as diverse as the country for which we draw our talent and which we seek to serve with our science.”

Ambrose Jearld, director of academic programs at NOAA’s Northeast Fisheries Science Center, is a longtime colleague of Lionel Hall. “He is local, a graduate of Falmouth High School, but has lived in Colorado and the United Kingdom while a member of the U.S. Air Force, and briefly in California before returning home,” said Jearld, who also chairs the Woods Hole Diversity Advisory Committee.

“He is a quiet force, often behind the scenes, but always there to help. He steps to the plate without being asked. Equality for all people is his ethos, and he approaches inclusion as both a personal and professional belief,” Jearld said. “His generosity of spirit has helped many young people find their direction and achieve their goals. He speaks and acts from the heart.”

Hall’s list of activities and volunteer efforts through the years is considerable, from the Town of Falmouth’s Affirmative Action Committee and the ‘No Place for Hate’ committee to life membership in the local American Veterans (AMVETS) Post 70 in Falmouth. He also serves as a master of ceremonies and disk jockey for 2-Way Entertainment, a local minority-owned wedding and event entertainment company.

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Related links:

Woods Hole Diversity Initiative: <http://www.woodsholediversity.org/Memorandum.html>

Woods Hole Diversity Advisory Committee: <http://www.woodsholediversity.org/>

The John K. Bullard Diversity Award: <http://www.woodsholediversity.org/event1213.htm>

2014 Woods Hole Juneteenth Celebration:

http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/press_release/pr2014/news/NR1406/