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Community Access National Network Names 2024 HIV Advocacy Scholarship Honorees

*Honorees include Yazmin Garcia Rico, Kamaria Laffrey, and
Kalvin Pugh*

WASHINGTON, DC (May 22, 2024) – The Community Access National Network, otherwise known as CANN, today named the honorees for its three advocacy scholarships. Named in memoriam after Thomas P. McCormick, Gary R. Rose, and the Honorable Maurice D. Hinchey, M.C, each of the advocacy scholarships focus on HIV/AIDS-related public policy issues.

- **The Thomas P. McCormick Advocacy Scholarship** was awarded to **Yazmin Garcia Rico**, MSW, Director of Community Engagement and Impact, joined the Cone Health Foundation. The scholarship is awarded annually to an advocate dedicated to improving access to care and treatment under Medicaid.
- **The Gary R. Rose Advocacy Scholarship** was awarded to **Kamaria Laffrey**, who is the Co-Executive Director of the SERO Project. The scholarship is awarded annually to an advocate dedicated to improving access to care and treatment under the Ryan White CARE Act.
- **The Honorable Maurice D. Hinchey Advocacy Scholarship** was co-awarded to **Kalvin Pugh**. Calvin is the Senior Advisor on Community Engagement for the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC). The scholarship is awarded annually to an advocated dedicated to improving access to care and treatment under national and global health programs.

The advocacy scholarships allow advocates to attend specific HIV/AIDS-related educational events. All three honorees will attend the 2024 SYNChronicity Conference — which is hosted by HealthHIV, HealthHCV, and the National Coalition for LGBT Health. The annual conference is the only national conference that connects numerous health care and public health audiences and systems in a dynamic healthcare environment to effectively address HIV, hepatitis C (HCV), sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and LGBTQ health, and health equity.

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About Yazmin Garcia Rico, MSW: Yazmin Garcia Rico, Director of Community Engagement and Impact, joined the Cone Health Foundation in May 2024. Prior, she served as the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' (NCDHHS) Director of Hispanic/Latinx Policy and Strategy. Throughout her career, she has been a tireless advocate for the Hispanic/Latinx and historically marginalized populations in North Carolina through different roles in the nonprofit, health, and government sector. Born in México and raised in North Carolina, Yazmin draws on her lived experience navigating complex systems as an immigrant who later benefited from Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and eventually became a permanent resident and a naturalized U.S. citizen to inform her work advocating for those at the margin.

About Kamaria Laffrey: Living with Black Girl Magic, HIV, and chronic optimism, Kamaria Laffrey serves nationally as Co-Executive Director with The SERO Project. Working to decriminalize HIV, she supports advocates in leading her state coalition on reform efforts and in both roles, offers strategic planning and community mobilization training to state leaders living with HIV to change their HIV criminalization laws.

About Calvin Pugh: Calvin Pugh is an award-winning HIV advocate and currently serves as the Senior Advisor on Community Engagement at the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care. Since his diagnosis in 2016 he has dedicated his life to reducing HIV-related stigma and improving quality of life for people living with HIV through peer education, ad campaigns, and traveling as a public speaker. Calvin currently resides in Kansas City, Kansas with his dog Chip.

For general information, please contact CANN at info@tiicann.org.

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About the Community Access National Network: *The mission of the Community Access National Network (CANN) is to define, promote, and improve access to healthcare services and supports for people living with HIV/AIDS and/or Viral Hepatitis through advocacy, education, and networking. These services must be affordable to the people who need them regardless of insurance status, income, or geographic location.*