



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

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PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE CELEBRATES OUR NATION'S CIVIL SERVANTS AT ANNUAL SERVICE TO AMERICA MEDALS GALA

Among those also to be honored are longtime public servant Paul A. Volcker and 2019 Spirit of Service recipient Michael R. Bloomberg

WASHINGTON – The nonprofit, nonpartisan [Partnership for Public Service](http://partnershipforpublicservice.org) will host its annual [Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals](http://partnershipforpublicservice.org) (Sammies) awards gala on Wednesday, October 16, to honor outstanding civil servants who have made significant contributions to the health, safety and prosperity of our country. Considered the “Oscars of government service,” the Sammies have earned a reputation as the premier awards program recognizing innovation and leadership in the federal government.

The Partnership also will present the second annual Spirit of Service award to **Michael R. Bloomberg**, founder of Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Philanthropies, and the 108th Mayor of New York City. Designed to shine a spotlight on individuals outside the federal government who have made significant contributions to public service, the award will recognize Bloomberg for his leadership in business, government and philanthropy, and for his commitment to making government work better.

“Our nation’s health and safety depend in significant measure on the work of career civil servants, who are largely unknown to the American people,” said Max Stier, president and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service. “We are working to change that with our Service to America Medals, which are designed to showcase the remarkable work taking place every day on behalf of all of us. When we have a great workforce, we get big problems fixed. Tonight’s recipients embody the very best in government, and we remain committed to ensuring America knows their stories, applauds their work and appreciates their service.”

NBC News’ chief foreign affairs correspondent and host of MSNBC’s “Andrea Mitchell Reports” **Andrea Mitchell** will emcee the gala. Adding to the evening’s enjoyment will be former Commerce Secretary **Penny Pritzker**, who will engage Bloomberg in a fireside chat.

Special gala presenters include: Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar; Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie; Senator Rick Scott (R-Fla.); former Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategy Dina Powell McCormick; former National Aeronautics and Space Administration Administrators Charles Bolden and Sean O’Keefe; and Office of Management and Budget Deputy Director for Management Margaret Weichert.

This year, the Partnership renamed its Career Achievement Medal to honor Paul Volcker, a remarkable public servant who completed two terms as Federal Reserve chairman and headed two nonpartisan Commissions on the Public Service that recommended sweeping federal government

reforms. The naming of the Paul A. Volcker Career Achievement award was made possible through the generous support of Ray and Barbara Dalio and [The Volcker Alliance](#)—a nonpartisan organization that advances effective management of government to achieve results that matter to citizens.

The six award winners were among 26 finalists announced in May 2019 and chosen from more than 300 nominations submitted to the Partnership for Public Service. The medalists were chosen by a prestigious selection committee that included leaders from government, business, foundations, academia, entertainment and the media.

The 2019 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals recipients are:

- The evening's top honor, **Federal Employee of the Year**, will be presented to [Victoria Brahm](#) of the Department of Veterans Affairs Tomah VA Medical Center (Tomah, Wis.). In 2015, the Wisconsin hospital and clinics of the medical center were in crisis, plagued by ongoing investigations of unsafe medical practices, excessive opioid use and a toxic work environment. Since taking charge four years ago, Brahm repaired and bolstered staff spirit, put in place a state-of-the-art pain management program and partnered with providers throughout the region to enhance the quality and range of care for veterans. Because of her leadership, the center's reputation as a flagship facility is now on the rise.
- The **Paul A. Volcker Career Achievement Medal** recipient is [Dr. Ann McKee](#) of the Department of Veterans Affairs Boston Healthcare System (Boston, Mass.). Chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE, is a neurodegenerative disorder that disproportionately affects military veterans as well as athletes who play contact sports. As one of the nation's leading CTE experts, McKee revolutionized scientific research and raised public awareness regarding concussions, brain injury and the devastating impact of CTE, and has focused on early detection and treatment options. Due to her efforts, the military has adopted procedures for screening veterans, and sports leagues have committed to neuroscience research and new concussion protocols.
- [Robert Cabana and the Kennedy Space Center Senior Management Team](#) of NASA (Kennedy Space Center, Fla.) are honored with the **Management Excellence Medal**. When NASA ended the 30-year-old space shuttle program in 2011, the future of the famed John F. Kennedy Space Center was in grave doubt. Cabana and his management team transformed the center into a globally distinguished launch site for government and commercial space exploration. With Cabana and his team at the helm, the center now partners with multiple commercial customers; launches the majority of space flights as opposed to overseas; and houses more than 50 facilities designated for commercial use. In July, Cabana and team also won the fifth annual **Service to America Medals People's Choice** award, selected by the public from among the 26 finalists.
- [Dr. Ryan Shelby](#) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (Port-au-Prince, Haiti) is the recipient of the **National Security and International Affairs Medal**. In October 2016, Hurricane Matthew struck Haiti as a Category 4 storm, affecting more than 2 million residents, killing 546 people and causing an estimated \$2 billion in damage. Shelby worked with his team to support reconstruction efforts, securing buy-in from local leaders; managing material shortages and preventing theft; investing in local contractors; and training locals to perform hurricane-resistant repairs. His work led to the rebuilding of nearly 5,000 homes and roofs in southern Haiti since July 2018, making structures safer and stronger to withstand future disasters.

- The **Safety and Law Enforcement Medal** recipient is **Jamie Rhome** of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Hurricane Center (Miami, Fla.). Storm surge from hurricanes causes most of the storm-related deaths in the United States, yet the National Weather Service's long-used warning system typically focused on high winds, often falling short on providing reliable predictions and warnings for the public on impending coastal flooding. Rhome and his team radically changed this dynamic with the development of a new forecasting and warning system that more accurately predicts the storm surge two days before a hurricane's landfall and is updated every six hours. He and his team have trained the emergency management community and weather forecasters to use the new system and worked with social scientists and the Federal Communications Commission to get storm surge information included with emergency alerts transmitted via cell phone.
- **Dr. Daniel B. Jernigan** of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (Atlanta, Ga.) is the recipient of the **Science and Environment Medal**. During his 25-year career at CDC, Jernigan has led responses to dozens of contagious disease outbreaks, including Ebola, SARS and West Nile virus, and as head of the agency's Influenza Division for the past 13 years, is a national leader in identifying and responding to pandemic and seasonal flu threats. Jernigan has taken innovative steps to improve influenza surveillance, prevention and control, including using genetic sequencing to characterize more than 6,000 flu viruses, leading to better and faster ways to understand the ever-evolving disease.

The awards ceremony will be streamed live from Washington, D.C., and viewable on the Partnership for Public Service's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts beginning at 6:30 p.m. EDT.

The premier and national sponsors for the 2019 Service to America Medals are Mrs. Ronnie F. Heyman and Family, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Chevron, Microsoft and Ingeborg and Ira Leon Rennert.

Renamed the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals in 2010 to commemorate the organization's founder, the program has honored more than 500 outstanding federal employees since its inception in 2002. For profiles and videos of current and past honorees, and to nominate a federal employee for a 2020 Service to America Medal, visit servicetoamericamedals.org.

During the past 18 years, the nonpartisan, nonprofit Partnership for Public Service has been dedicated to making the federal government more effective. We work across administrations to help transform the way government operates by increasing collaboration, accountability, efficiency and innovation. Visit ourpublicservice.org to learn more. Follow us on social [@RPublicService](#) and [subscribe](#) today to get the latest federal news, information on upcoming Partnership programs and events, and more.

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