

AAFA Celebrates Stewardship and Progress with the 2023 American Image Awards

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES, April 26, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [American Apparel & Footwear Association](#) (AAFA) hosted the 2023 AAFA [American Image Awards](#) last evening at the iconic Plaza Hotel in New York City. Emceed by the host of Boston Globe Today, Segun Oduolowu, the gala honored inspirational leaders and advocates in the apparel and footwear industries.

The AAFA American Image Awards honorees included New Balance Athletics Inc. as Company of the Year – accepted by Joe Preston; Willy Chavarria for Designer of the Year; Harlem’s Fashion Row for Fashion Maverick – accepted by Brandice Daniel; Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the inaugural Global Vanguard; and William McDonough for Eco-Steward of the Year.

For the seventh year, AAFA partnered with the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) Foundation as its beneficiary with the proceeds funding the future of the industry and the development of invaluable philanthropic programs.



L-R: Steven, Kolb, Stephen Lamar, Dr. Uzodinma Iweala, Joe Preston, William McDonough, Willy Chavarria, Brandice Daniel and Segun Oduolowu at the 2023 AAFA American Images. Photo credit Slaven Vlastic for Getty Images.



2023 American Image Awards at The Plaza Hotel. Photo credit Slaven Vlastic for Getty Images.

“The individuals and entities we are honoring this year for 2023 are initiators, leaders, and progress drivers,” said AAFA President and CEO Steve Lamar. “The power of the U.S. fashion industry is anchored in its global value chains and the billions of people around the world they employ and serve. This annual event demonstrates our evolution as an industry and celebrates these outstanding individuals and companies



for their leadership, excellence, and noteworthy achievements in all sectors of the apparel and footwear industry.”

“Each of tonight’s honorees are at the forefront of our changing industry, and they are building communities that will shape and define the future of American fashion,” said Steven Kolb, CEO of the CFDA. “We are very proud and thankful of our partnership with the AAFA and the positive impact it has had.”

The jubilant mood of the room was palpable from the time emcee Segun Oduolowu entered the stage. As Segun introduced each honoree the celebration incrementally elevated. Brandice Daniel was first to the podium to accept the Fashion Maverick honor on behalf of the organization she founded, Harlem’s Fashion Row. Designer of the Year honoree Willy Chavarria came next and was visibly awestruck by his honor as he accepted his Isabel and Ruben Toledo designed statuette. Joining the festivities was William McDonough, the annual event’s third Eco-Steward of the Year honoree. McDonough offered a thought-provoking lesson on being “fabulous” and the concept of being “net 100% good,” leaving everyone to rethink what it means to be stewards of our planet.

As the program returned from dinner, the inaugural Global Vanguard honor was bestowed upon the Director General of the World Trade Organization, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala who accepted via video, followed by a heartfelt tribute and thank you by her son – and CEO of The Africa Center – Dr. Uzodinma Iweala from the podium. The evening reached a final crescendo when Joe Preston, CEO of New Balance Athletics accepted the Company of the Year honor to the delight of his countless supporters.

Prior to the Awards program, the red carpet buzzed with stars, fashion executives, and designers in celebration of the night’s honorees. Designers and Creative Directors included Brandon Blackwood, John Bartlett, Ruthie Davis, Gita Omri, Danielle Frankel, Andrew Kwon, Nicholas Raefski, Charles Harbison, Grace Ling, and Sonya Keshwani. Other VIP guests included Melanie Willingham-Jaggers, Executive Director of GLSEN, CaSandra Diggs, President of CFDA, and actor David Granados.

"On behalf of AAFA's Board of Directors, congratulations to this year's honorees for embracing accountability, traceability, global stewardship, supply chain resilience, social impact, and progress," shared Josue Solano, AAFA Vice Chair and CEO of BBC International. "We stand together not only to meet the present challenges across our business, but to fearlessly champion the future so that the global communities in which we work can prosper and thrive economically as well as through equity and inclusion."

[Images from the AAFA American Image Awards are available from Getty Images.](#) (photo credit Slaven Vlastic for Getty Images)

Photo Caption: 2023 AAFA American Image Awards

Social Media: #AmericanImageAwards @ApparelAndFootwear (Instagram) @ApparelFootwear (Twitter)

ABOUT THE AMERICAN APPAREL & FOOTWEAR ASSOCIATION

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) is the national trade association representing apparel, footwear and other sewn products companies, and their suppliers, which compete in the global market. Representing more than 1,000 world famous name brands, AAFA is the trusted public policy and political voice of the apparel and footwear industry, its management and shareholders, its more than three million U.S. workers, and its contribution of \$470 billion in annual U.S. retail sales. AAFA drives progress on three key priorities: Brand Protection; Supply Chain & Sourcing; and Trade, Logistics, & Manufacturing. AAFA approaches this work through the lens of purpose-driven leadership in a manner that supports each member's ability to build and sustain inclusive and diverse cultures, meet and advance ESG goals, and draw upon the latest technology.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN IMAGE AWARDS

Owned and operated by AAFA for nearly 50 years, the American Image Awards has been honoring those who have exemplified leadership, excellence, and outstanding achievement in all sectors of the apparel and footwear industry – including design, manufacturing, and retail. The American Image Awards Gala is the one event in the fashion industry each year where the worlds of design, manufacturing, and business intersect.

ABOUT THE CFDA FOUNDATION

The Council of Fashion Designers of America, Inc. (CFDA) is a not-for-profit trade association, whose membership consists of America's foremost apparel, jewelry and accessory designers. CFDA Members include Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Michael Kors, Donna Karan, Diane Von Furstenberg, Alexander Wang, Carolina Herrera, Jason Wu, Proenza Schouler, Tom Ford, and more than 500 others. The CFDA Foundation is a separate not-for-profit organization, which was created to raise funds for charity and industry activities. Through innovative partnerships with brands, retailers, and CFDA designers, the Foundation is able to leverage fashion and effectively

generate awareness and funds for these charitable causes.

R. Scott French

VERY New York

+1 917-816-0665

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