

The American Apparel & Footwear Association Unveils 2024 American Image Awards Honorees

Celebrating excellence and influence across fashion, this event spotlights visionaries who embody Innovation, Stewardship, Leadership, and Global Impact.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, December 6, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [American Apparel & Footwear Association](#) (AAFA) announces inspiring honorees for its [2024 American Image Awards](#) this spring in NYC. Celebrating

excellence and influence across the fashion landscape, this prestigious event spotlights visionaries who have embodied Innovation, Stewardship, Leadership, and Global Impact.



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Steve Lamar, President and CEO, AAFA

A distinguished group of individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions across the fashion industry and in communities around the world, the 2024 honorees include:

Lizanne Kindler, Executive Chair & CEO, KnitWell Group, as Person of the Year; Carhartt, Inc. as Company of the Year; Wes Gordon, Creative Director, Carolina Herrera, as Designer of the Year; Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, International Trade Centre, as Global Vanguard; Global Fashion Agenda, accepted by CEO, Federica Marchionni, as Eco-Steward of the Year; and Allan Ellinger, Senior Managing Partner, MMG Advisors, as Trailblazer.

The gala – taking place at Gotham Hall in New York City on Tuesday, April 16, 2024 – will feature return emcee Segun Oduolowu, Boston Globe Today TV show host. The Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) Foundation will be the event’s longstanding charitable beneficiary.

Steve Lamar, President and CEO, AAFA reflects, "This year's American Image Awards honorees have shepherded significant advancements throughout our industry – transforming the business through innovation and stewardship while accelerating traceability, transparency, and technology across their U.S. and global operations. We look forward to celebrating their accomplishments and ambitions."



"Entering our 8th consecutive year as AAFA's beneficiary partner, the CFDA and its Foundation are incredibly proud that with AAFA's support we are able to foster critical initiatives bettering the American fashion industry at large," said Steven Kolb, CEO, CFDA. "We thank AAFA for their continued focus and partnership of the [CFDA Foundation](#), which is so crucial to our initiatives around health, safety, diversity, inclusion, and progress."

PERSON OF THE YEAR

Lizanne Kindler, Executive Chair and CEO of KnitWell Group, Inc.

KnitWell Group is a collection of iconic American specialty apparel brands, Ann Taylor, Haven Well Within, Lane Bryant, LOFT, and Talbots. Together, these brands employ 30,000 associates, in 1,700 stores, generate \$4 billion in annual sales, and have more than 12 million loyal customers, making KnitWell one of the largest specialty apparel companies in the United States.

KnitWell Group was officially established in August 2023 under Kindler's leadership to harness the power of this best-in-class, multi-brand operating model. Through KnitWell, Kindler and her team have found a way to leverage consistent best practices while also delivering iconic, relevant, and inspiring brands with unique product and customer experiences.

COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Carhartt, Inc. – accepted by Danilo Amoretty, Senior Vice President, Supply Chain - Product Supply and Operations

Founded in 1889 as a purveyor of workwear in Detroit, Michigan by Hamilton Carhartt, Carhartt, Inc. has grown from a mere two sewing machines and five employees creating the brand's now-legendary bib to one of America's most recognizable brands. Emblazoned with the iconic "C" patch, Carhartt's workwear is instantly recognized the world over for rugged, durable gear designed to serve and protect hardworking people and last generations.

Today, Carhartt remains family-owned by direct descendants of Hamilton Carhartt himself and operates more than 30 company-owned stores, with their flagship location and headquarters still located in the company's hometown of Detroit. Carhartt has manufacturing operations in the United States, Mexico, and Europe, with more than 3,000 employees worldwide. Continuing to redefine the limits of workwear with new technologies and enduring value, Carhartt remains committed to providing purpose-built products designed to take on any condition – both on and off the job site.

DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

Wes Gordon – Creative Director, Carolina Herrera

Appointed by the brand's legendary founder, Carolina Herrera, Wes leads the global creative strategy of the global luxury fashion house across all brand platforms including ready-to-wear, fragrance, beauty, and eyewear. Upon graduation from Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design in London, the Atlanta-raised designer moved to New York City to launch his eponymous line of womenswear and presented his collection in New York from 2010 to 2016.

During this time, Gordon received the Fashion Group International's Rising Star Award and was a finalist for the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund. In March 2017, Wes began consulting with Carolina Herrera before being appointed Creative Director in 2018. Most recently, Wes was inducted into Business of Fashion's venerable #BoF500 list and in 2021 the Couture Council Award for Artistry of Fashion.

GLOBAL VANGUARD

Pamela Coke-Hamilton – Executive Director, International Trade Centre

Pamela Coke-Hamilton has served as Executive Director of ITC since October 2020. Since that time, she has led the agency to meet the economic and trade challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent global supply chain disruptions. Ms. Coke-Hamilton has a breadth of experience and expertise in trade-related capacity-building and sustainable development and a deep understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable economies such as the small island developing states and least developed countries.

Having worked extensively with the private sector and academia across African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries to build trade-related institutional strength within member States, Ms. Coke-Hamilton also established the Women Empowered through Export (WeXport) platform to address the disadvantages that women-owned firms experience in accessing markets. She began her career in Jamaica's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and later also served as Director of Trade, Tourism and Competitiveness of the Organization of American States (OAS) and Executive Director of the Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA).

ECO STEWARD OF THE YEAR

Global Fashion Agenda – accepted by Federica Marchionni, CEO

Global Fashion Agenda (GFA) is a non-profit organization that fosters industry collaboration on sustainability in fashion to accelerate impact. With the vision of a net positive fashion industry, it drives action by mobilizing, inspiring, influencing and educating all stakeholders. Through its partnerships with some of the garment industry's most influential and celebrated companies across the value chain, Federica Marchionni, an industry veteran, is spearheading the fashion industry's journey towards a more sustainable future. Through its work, GFA reaches thousands of stakeholders including brands, innovators, NGOs, policy makers, manufacturers, investors and more.

One of GFA's keystone events is its Global Fashion Summit, a multi-stakeholder event renowned as a nexus for agenda-setting discussions on the most critical environmental, ethical, and social issues. Marchionni leads on elevating the organization's prestigious forums, continuing the publication of reputable thought leadership, and propelling its advocacy efforts. With GFA she strives to instill the belief that a thriving garment industry has the power to create prosperity for people and communities, reverse climate change, and protect biodiversity.

TRAILBLAZER

Allan Ellinger, Senior Managing Partner of MMG Advisors

Founder and Senior Managing Partner of MMG Advisors, a 35-year-old investment banking advisory practice focused on the consumer product sector, Allan has been instrumental in building and evolving the practice from its initial turnaround/restructuring emphasis to one of the preeminent full-service M&A firms servicing the fashion and consumer products sector. Since 1989, Allan and the firm have been involved in hundreds of engagements including restructurings, sell-side, and buy-side investment banking assignments.

Ellinger is an active fashion insider who strongly believes in, and advocates for, social responsibility. He is the Founder and former Chairman of Fashion Delivers, which merged with K.I.D.S. in 2013 to form Delivering Good and which he chaired through 2018. Ellinger has also been a member of the Board of Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City's Accountants & Bankers Division, the Fashion Division of UJA Federation of New York, as well as a Board member of AAFA.

Full details about the honorees and gala, including how to participate can be found at www.americanimageawards.org.

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 3.2 million U.S. workers, and its contribution of

\$490 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 close to 50 years, AAFA's American Image Awards has been honoring those who have exemplified leadership, excellence, and outstanding achievement in all sectors of the apparel and footwear industry.

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. 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.

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