

AAFA Celebrates Visionary Leadership with the 2025 American Image Awards

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) hosted the 2025 AAFA American Image Awards honoring leaders across the apparel & footwear industries.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [American Apparel & Footwear Association](#) (AAFA) hosted the [2025 AAFA American Image Awards](#) Tuesday evening at the iconic Gotham Hall in midtown Manhattan. Emceed by Bloomberg's Chief Markets Correspondent, Scarlet Fu, the gala honored leaders and advocates across the apparel and footwear industries. The [Council of Fashion Designers of America](#) (CFDA) Foundation is the event's longstanding charitable beneficiary.



Honorees, speakers, & emcee at the 2025 American Image Awards

The AAFA American Image Awards honorees included Target as Retailer of the Year, accepted by Bill Foudy, Senior Vice President and President of Owned Brands; American Textile Company as Company of the Year, accepted by Lance Ruttenberg, President and CEO; Dr. D'Wayne Edwards, President of Pensole Lewis College as Fashion Maverick; Katherine Gold, President and CEO of GoldBug as Trailblazer; Apparel Impact Institute as Eco-Steward of the Year, accepted by President Lewis Perkins; and Ulla Johnson as Designer of the Year.

The evening celebrated legacy and innovation, with a strong emphasis on sustainability. Katherine Gold was the first honoree of the night, speaking about her company's three-generation commitment to children's products and its growing focus on maternal health. "I believe that achieving a better tomorrow for all of us is completely doable if we each make doing so part of our core corporate conviction," said Gold in her acceptance speech.

Continuing the theme, Lewis Perkins emphasized the holistic side of sustainability, stating, “Because sustainability is not just a technical challenge—it’s a human one. It’s about reconnecting the soul of a company to the soul of its purpose.”

Representing American Textile Company, Lance Ruttenberg reflected on the company's 100-year anniversary, sharing, “We believe in sharing our success with the communities and people that have supported us on this journey in ways that can make their lives just a little better in the cities we have operations. If we can succeed in business while giving back to those people and those communities, we hope to have demonstrated being worthy of this incredible recognition received this evening.”

“

As we face a challenging time for our industry, the 2025 American Image Awards is a powerful reminder of why we remain optimistic. The honorees each embody creativity, resilience, & vision.”

*Steve Lamar, president & CEO
of AAFA*



Dr. D'Wayne Edwards speaks at the 2025 American Image Awards

Following dinner, the program spotlighted Laura Weber of LW Weber, a CFDA grant recipient who spoke about the critical impact of CFDA's support on American manufacturing. Ulla Johnson made an emotional statement using her designs “to continue to celebrate women's voices, our collective power, and our hard won rights for all those less fortunate than I, and for my daughter and all the daughters in generations to come.”

She was followed by Dr. D'Wayne Edwards, who inspired the room with a message of resilience, stating, “At Pensole Lewis our mission is clear... Make dreams accessible to

everyone willing to work hard for it.”

The final remarks came from Bill Foudy, speaking on behalf of Target, who shared, “I want to thank AAFA for their partnership and for being a trusted voice for the apparel and footwear industry... The work you do to help shape public policy and ensure we are represented at the national level has never been more important.”

The evening was a tribute to America’s proud heritage of fashion and manufacturing, while celebrating the exciting future ahead through continued commitments to sustainability, innovation, and global impact.

"As we face a challenging time for our industry, the 2025 American Image Awards is a powerful reminder of why we remain optimistic," said Steve Lamar, president and CEO of AAFA. "The honorees we celebrate tonight embody the creativity, resilience, and vision that continue to push us forward. This year has already tested us in new ways, but it's clear that unity and diversity—across people, ideas, and approaches—are what will drive us through. Our 2025 American Image Award honorees show exactly why our industry will not just endure, but thrive."

"On behalf of the entire AAFA Board, I applaud this exceptional group for their visionary contributions to our industry," said Halide Alagöz, chair of the American Apparel & Footwear Association. "Through our partnership with the CFDA Foundation, we are proud to celebrate our industry's success and the honorees who are shaping the future of fashion and footwear."

"We offer enormous thanks all those who attended the American Image Awards for the support to the CFDA Foundation and our crucial partnership with AAFA," said Steven Kolb, CEO, CFDA. "Through the Foundation, we are able to advance support of important work on behalf of the American fashion industry, including local manufacturing, business grants, scholarships, and DEI programming."

As guests arrived, the red carpet buzzed with energy, drawing fashion executives, designers, influencers, and other notable figures together in anticipation of the evening's celebration. Among the designers were Reem Acra, Kate Barton, John Bartlett, Olivia Cheng, Chuks Collins, Aisling Camps, Jonathan Cohen, Ruthie Davis, Ken Downing, Dr. D'Wayne Edwards, Evan Hirsch, D'On Lauren Edwards, Joseph Millman, Bibhu Mohapatra, Jameel Mohammed, Cynthia Rowley, Kim Shui, Emily Smith, Cyril Verdavainne, Jane Wade, and Houston White. Other VIP guests



Katherine Gold, CEO of GoldBug accepts her Trailblazer Award at the 2025 American Image Awards



Emcee Scarlet Fu of Bloomberg TV opens the 2025 American Image Awards

included influencers Tijana Ibrahimovich, Jen Su, Lindsey Coffey, and Caroline Vazzana, Maryanne Grisiz of Fashion Group International, model Frederique van der Wal, Gary Wassner of Hildun Corporation, Laura Weber of LW Pearl, Lisa Smilor of CFDA, Jack Ouellette of American Textile Company, Halide Alagöz of Ralph Lauren Corporation, and Gail Klapper of The Klapper Firm. Also in attendance were previous honorees Brandice Daniel of Harlem's Fashion Row, and Federica Marchionni of Global Fashion Agenda.

Social Media: [#AmericanImageAward](#)
[@ApparelAndFootwear](#) (Instagram) [@ApparelFootwear](#) (Twitter)



CEO of the American Apparel & Footwear Association
at the 2025 American Image Awards

ABOUT THE AMERICAN APPAREL & FOOTWEAR ASSOCIATION

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) 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 1,100 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 3.5 million U.S. workers, and its contribution of more than \$509 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 49 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.

R. Scott French
VERY New York
+1 917-816-0665

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/809024896>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.