



Building
Rural
Communities
Celebrating
35 Years
1971-2006

RURAL HOUSING SERVICE AWARDS

Past Recipients

2004

Skip Jason Community Service Award

- **David Arizmendi, Executive Director**
Proyecto Azteca; Azteca Community Loan Fund
San Juan, Texas
- **John “Jack” Rivel, Special Project Director**
Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises, Inc.
Berea, Kentucky
- **Mario Villanueva, Executive Director**
Diocese of Yakima Housing Services
Yakima, Washington
- **Jerome Little, Executive Director**
Tallahatchie Housing, Inc.
Webb, Mississippi

Clay Cochran Award

- **Cushing Dolbeare**
Housing & Public Policy Advocate
Mitchellville, MD

2002

Skip Jason Community Service Award

- Lynn Luallen
- Madeline Miller

Clay Cochran Award

- Peter Carey
- Obediah Baker

2000

Skip Jason Community Service Award

- Laurretta Brice Stephens
- Cora Esquibel
- Arturo C. Gonzales
- Dana M. Jones

Clay Cochran Award

- Eileen Fitzgerald

1998

Clay Cochran Award

- Arnold Sternberg

Skip Jason Community Service Award

- Guillermo Castaneda
- Dwayne Yost
- John Zippert

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS CELEBRATE PAST AND FUTURE HOUSING LEADERS

Housing Assistance Council names their awards after two housing professionals that have made an impact on the movement to create low-income rural housing.

SKIP JASON (1939-1982)

Robert Mayer (Skip) Jason, a former HAC employee and housing advocate, was committed to improving living conditions for the rural poor. Skip was a native of Bluefield, West Virginia where he first learned about the difficult conditions of the rural poor. In 1963, he became one of the first Peace Corp Volunteers to be sent to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Upon his return to the United States, he worked for community action agencies in Indiana, West Virginia, Vermont, and the District of Columbia. In 1974, he helped to set up Buffalo Housing, Inc. in southern West Virginia, a nonprofit organization established to help victims of the Buffalo Creek flood disaster. Skip first joined HAC in its Atlanta office. In 1978, he moved to HAC's Government Services Division in Washington, D.C. As a HAC employee, he worked on the Community Development Block Grant program, which included a set-aside for small cities and rural communities. Skip was also instrumental in developing the Farmers Home Administration's Homeownership Assistance Program which, although never funded, resulted in a Congress that was more supportive and more aware of rural housing issues.

CLAY COCHRAN (1915-1982)

Clay L. Cochran was a fierce housing advocate who has often been credited as the founder of the rural housing movement. Clay, a fiery commentator on housing and basic needs, strongly believed that the federal government must not shirk its responsibility of providing basic shelter for low-income rural people. He also believed that the people, given the power to govern themselves, had the capacity to “create a society where there is less human anguish than yesterday.” Some of his many accomplishments were to organize the Rural America organization, the National Rural Housing Coalition, and the International Self-Help Housing Association. He claimed that his enthusiasm for decent housing resulted from a winter during his teens when his family lost its farm and lived out the coldest months in a tent on the West Texas plains.

2004 RECIPIENT BIOS

Skip Jason Community Service Award

David Arizmendi is the Executive Director of Proyecto Azteca, which helps 80 extremely low-income colonias families gain the opportunity to build their own homes each year. David learned invaluable lessons from Cesar Chavez, including how to promote equality for farmworkers. He is also the CEO of the Azteca Community Loan Fund, a CDFI that serves the financial needs of colonias residents. David is also the founder of Iniciative Frontera (IF), a community/economic development organization on the Texas/Mexico border. Under his direction, IF pioneered the use of the promotor model to affect change in the colonias. In 2001, he was selected as a James A. Johnson Fellow, and member of the Rockefeller Next Generation Leadership cohort.

John “Jack” Rivel has dedicated over 49 years of service to rural housing. He has worked at the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises (FAHE) since 1984, performing such duties as underwriting, technical assistance, and inspection. Jack has been an invaluable asset to FAHE Member groups as a Rural Development-approved Plan Reviewer, a HUD Certified Builder, and a Certified Mortgage Loan Processor. During his tenure at FAHE, Jack has touched the lives of nearly 34,000 families and helped to build a network of 30 housing providers. He has advanced the use of USDA RD products and Kentucky remains one of the highest users of Section 502 loans.

Born to a farmworker family, **Mario Villanueva’s** commitment to the farmworker community of Central Washington is personal. He does the work because it is needed and the families are entitled to decent and affordable housing. Mario has spent most of his adult life in the housing field. His experience includes construction, financing, and development. The Diocese of Yakima Housing Services has developed affordable housing projects in several parts of Washington state. Mario has personified the mission of DYHS: creating communities where people are treated with dignity and respect, have their basic needs met and are empowered to enhance their own lives.

Jerome Little founded Tallahatchie Housing in 1992 and has served as its Executive Director since that time. As the founder and head of this local nonprofit, Mr. Little has become an expert and successful developer of rural housing for low-income people in six counties of Mississippi. He has developed over 3,000 units of multi-family housing. Jerome started from scratch with the founding of the organization. The aim was to create something to help the poor families and especially the children of the community. The Tallahatchie Housing, Inc. Program has been very successful, completing nearly 300 homes in six counties.

Clay Cochran Award for Distinguished Service in Housing for the Rural Poor

Dedicated to affordable housing for over 50 years, **Cushing Dolbeare** has participated at the highest policy development levels. While organizational development is an important part of her contributions, her research has provided the intellectual underpinning of much of the effort to get the Congress to support housing programs. Cushing is the Founder of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, an organization that is still a major force on behalf of decent housing for the poor. Her research and organizational leadership have helped local groups advocate before state legislatures, county boards, and city councils.