



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Gloria McCauley, Executive Director 614-294-7867.

BRAVO Announces 2010 Community Service Award Recipients
Winners to be Honored at *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner 2010*

Columbus: BRAVO is pleased to announce the winners of its **2010 BRAVO Community Service Awards**. The honor will be shared by Napoleon Bell, Director of the City of Columbus Community Relations Commission (CRC) and Deborah Schipper, Wellness Coordinator of the Sexual Violence Education and Support Office at The Ohio State University.

Each year BRAVO honors individuals and organizations that have gone “above and beyond” in their service, dedication and work within and on behalf of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities. Traditionally BRAVO acknowledges those whose work goes on behind the scenes, often unnoticed and under-appreciated.

Napoleon Bell has been a quiet but effective leader within the City of Columbus. After several years as deputy director, Bell was appointed Interim Director by Mayor Michael B. Coleman in September 2008. Director Bell made it an immediate priority to ensure the passage of a revision to the Columbus City Civil Rights Code that expanded the list of protected classes to include gender identity and expression. This legislation, granting protections in employment, housing, public accommodations and under the ethnic intimidation or hate crimes statute, was passed and took effect prior to Bell being appointed to the permanent directorship in March 2009. A draft of this revision had been in process at the Community Relations Commission and City Hall for a number of years. Bell’s leadership was instrumental in getting things moving and the eventual passage of the revisions.

In addition to the accomplishment of the civil rights revisions, Napoleon has proved himself a staunch ally to the LGBT communities, leading the CRC in hosting a series of community education programs on hate crimes, moderating several programs on the Government TV station (GTV3) about LGBT issues, and meeting regularly with community leaders, including LGBT community leaders to build bridges between communities.

Deborah Schipper serves as the Wellness Coordinator for the Ohio State University office of Sexual Violence Education and Support. She is a certified Self-Defense Instructor with the National Women's Martial Arts Federation. Schipper develops and implements workshops and programs focusing on the prevention of sexual violence and addressing situations of sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse, and stalking. In that capacity she has co-sponsored, with BRAVO, numerous multi-week self defense classes for the LGBT community. Unlike most University programming of this sort, these classes are open not only to OSU students but the entire LGBT community. She has been a long term supporter of BRAVO, working with BRAVO clients to ensure that there are safe places for survivors,

creating a program where survivors can receive best care, and be treated with respect and dignity. Deb has created a program that is dedicated to empowering all survivors and supporting their wellness and healing.

The **2010 BRAVO Community Service Awards** will be presented at BRAVO's signature event ***Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*** on Saturday May 1, 2010. The awards presentation will take place at the opening cocktail reception at 6:00 PM at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center on the Whittier Peninsula. For more information or to purchase tickets contact the BRAVO office 614-294-7867 or visit www.bravo-ohio.org.

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BRAVO's mission is to eliminate violence perpetrated on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identification, domestic violence and sexual assault through prevention, education, advocacy, violence documentation and survivor services, both within and on behalf of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities.