



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Cambridge Author and Social Activist Debby Irving
To Receive National Race Amity Medal of Honor**

Best-selling author and social activist Debby Irving of Cambridge will be honored this fall with the National Center for Race Amity's Race Amity Medal of Honor for her record of courage and commitment to advancing racial justice, equity and access across the nation.

Lauded by thought leaders Vann Jones, Peggy McIntosh, and Tim Wise, Irving has carried her message to hundreds of corporate, education, religion, and non-profit organizations across the nation. Her work for over a decade includes stimulating and spurring reflection and action through powerful presentations and workshops to diverse audiences from the World Bank and Harvard University to small town school committees and high school groups.

"Ms. Irving's work as a white woman with its personal candor speaks to white Americans with an insight that non-whites cannot communicate," said National Center for Race Amity Executive Director, William H. "Smitty" Smith. "Her style which is not preachy but from the heart stirs audiences to self-reflection and action."

Irving's best-selling book, *Waking Up White*, is recipient of the Independent Publishers Award, and is a must-read staple in dialogues on race relations. According to Van Jones, author and former assistant to President Barack Obama, "Debby Irving's powerful *Waking Up White* opens a rare window on how white Americans are socialized. Irving's focus on the mechanics of racism operating in just one life -- her own -- may lead white readers to reconsider the roots of their own perspectives -- and their role in dismantling old myths. Readers of color will no doubt find the view through Irving's window fascinating and telling."

Ms. Irving will join a roster of notable Race Amity Medal of Honor recipients, which include civil rights leader Dolores Huerta, documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, President Michael Higgins of Ireland, former Secretary of Defense William Cohen, renowned philosopher and activist Cornel West, and recently deceased law professor and attorney Charles Ogletree.

National Center for Race Amity

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The National Center for Race Amity created the Race Amity Medal of Honor awards program in 2013 to recognize and honor individuals who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to advancing access and equity in society through interracial partnerships. The awards are presented at a banquet held annually on the eve of the National Race Amity Conference each November.

This year's Race Amity Medal of Honor awards ceremony will be held on Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 6:30 PM at Atlanta's historic Mary Mac's Tea Room, located at 224 Ponce De Leon Ave NE.

Along with Ms. Irving, this year's recipients are University of Kentucky men's basketball coach and advisor/mentor to NBA players of color, John Calipari; Steve Sarowitz, philanthropist founder of the Wayfarer Foundation and chairman of the publicly traded Paylocity company; and Fortune 500 and international business and diversity consultant Robert C. Henderson, Ed.D.

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