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TO: Sonoma County Non-Profits and Foundations
FROM: Veronica Ferguson, County Administrator, County of Sonoma
RE: 201 Jefferson Awards
DATE: June 15, 2015

On behalf of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, I am pleased to open nominations for 'The Jefferson Awards' for our eighth year. The Jefferson Awards for Public Service is a prestigious local and national recognition program honoring service to America. This program was founded in 1972 by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr., and Sam Beard, former staffer for Robert Kennedy, to create a nationally recognized award for outstanding community and public service. The Jefferson Award program, known for promoting civic engagement in communities around the country, renews the vitality of our democracy at work by promoting civic efforts through leaders in the media, civic organizations, business, government, schools, colleges, and foundations. The annual national winners are selected by a non-partisan Board of Selectors that includes Laura Bush, Teresa Heinz, Leslie Stahl, Ronnie Lott, Michael Douglas, Whoopi Goldberg, and Senators Harry Reid and Mitch McConnell, to name a few.

The Jefferson Awards are presented on three levels, national, regional and local. The County of Sonoma will facilitate the selection of five award winners at the local level. Local award winners will then be forwarded to the regional (San Francisco Bay area) recognition program. You may have seen or heard the regional program in action. KPIX CBS 5 TV and KCBS-AM regularly highlight regional award winners. Each December regional selects five 'Silver Medalists' from the local Jefferson Award winners and submit them to national level. Each year in June, one recipient from regional winners travels to Washington D.C. to be honored at the national ceremony, along with the national recipients. Past national recipients include Jimmy Carter, Colin Powell, Sally Ride, Paul Newman, Barbara Bush, Oprah Winfrey, and Peyton Manning.

We have developed the Sonoma County Jefferson Awards criteria to spotlight "**Excellence in Community Leadership and Civic Engagement.**" We have been very careful to complement, and not compete, with other community recognition programs. I feel we simply cannot have too many programs to recognize those wonderful people who form the bedrock of our fabulous community. I hope you will participate by nominating an individual, a non-profit agency, board, commission, or advisory body, who you think has best demonstrated, "Excellence in Community Leadership and Civic Engagement" in our local community.

The program criteria and nomination materials are available at www.sonoma-county.org. Deadline for submissions is Friday, August 7, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. The awards ceremony will be held in November 2015, during a regular meeting of the County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors. If you have questions, please contact Sylvia Lemus at (707) 565-1702 or sylvia.lemus@sonoma-county.org.

cc: Board of Supervisors