



Fair Housing Council
of Orange County
Fostering Diversity in Housing

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NEWS RELEASE

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****Editor's Note: Photos of winners available upon request****

FAIR HOUSING COUNCIL OF ORANGE COUNTY ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF FAIR HOUSING LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Five Leaders in the Housing Industry Receive Accolades For Their Work to Promote Fair Housing in OC

SANTA ANA, CALIF., April 30, 2007...The Fair Housing Council of Orange County announced the winners of its prestigious Fair Housing Leadership Awards at the **7th Annual Fair Housing Leadership Awards Luncheon** held on April 27, at the Turnip Rose in Costa Mesa, Calif. The Fair Housing Leadership Award honors individuals and organizations who have taken positive action to foster diversity and eliminate housing discrimination in Orange County. Fair Housing Leadership Awards were presented to five organizations and/or individuals in various segments of the housing industry for making significant contributions that support the spirit and letter of Fair Housing laws which they have demonstrated through deeds, business policies, or other means. Leadership Awards were presented to the following organizations and individuals:

- **Schroeder Management** – Rental Housing Industry
- **Apartment Association of Orange County** – Advertising Industry
- **Joni Ruelaz, Santa Ana Housing Authority** – Nonprofit Category
- **Paula Cosenza, Orange County Association of Realtors** – Real Estate Industry
- **State Farm Insurance** – Lending Industry

Orange County Supervisor Bill Campbell, 3rd District, and Senator Tom Harman, 35th District, were both keynote speakers at the event. Both speakers recognized the winners for their outstanding accomplishments in promoting fair housing in Orange County by presenting them with certificates and highlighted the importance of incorporating fair housing into every day business practices.

Schroeder Management was chosen as the winner of the Fair Housing Leadership Award in the Rental category because they are and continue to be a dedicated supporter of the Fair Housing Council's programs and services. Schroeder's staff receives fair housing and other industry training on a monthly basis. In addition, they also ensure that all their marketing materials display the fair housing logo and they work closely with the Orange County Housing Authority to promote equal housing opportunities. In addition, this

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organization complies with fair housing laws and promotes equal housing opportunities by quickly contacting the Fair Housing Council if a housing issue or questions arises. Schroeder is also an equal opportunity employer and its staff is ethnically diverse at all levels and its communities consist of diverse populations.

The Apartment Association of Orange County was selected as the winner in the Advertising category because they are an active and long time supporter of the Fair Housing Council through sponsorship of events, running complimentary fair housing articles and advertisements for fair housing trainings in their monthly Apartment Magazine all year long. In addition, during fair housing month, the AAOC displays the winners of the fair housing poster contest on the cover of their monthly publication and are sure to run a fair housing article to educate their members. They also co-sponsor seminars to help educate the housing industry on fair housing issues. The AAOC also ensures that it has the equal housing opportunity logo in all of their ads and they review their ads to ensure they comply with fair housing laws. The AAOC is also quick to call the Fair Housing Council if they or their members have a question or a fair housing issue comes up.

Joni Ruelaz of the Santa Ana Housing Authority was selected as the winner of the Fair Housing Leadership Award in the Nonprofit category because she has been and continues to be a strong supporter of fair housing and she continually helps the Fair Housing Council further its mission by promoting its programs and services. Ruelaz has previously volunteered and served on the board of directors of the Fair Housing Council and continually supports fair housing programs and events. In addition, Ruelaz encourages the housing industry to attend fair housing training and also encourages housing providers to abide by fair housing laws and display equal opportunity signage at their locations. In addition, Ruelaz continually encourages residents to utilize the services of the Fair Housing Council if they are experiencing a housing related problem or have a housing question.

Paula Cosenza was chosen as the winner of the Fair Housing Leadership Award in the Real Estate Sales category because she is an outstanding real estate professional who is committed to promoting and encouraging fair housing through her professional and community involvement. As a seasoned real estate professional, Cosenza previously served on the board of directors and the chair of the education committee for the Orange County Association of Realtors. In that role, Cosenza helped to establish fair housing educational programs to help educate Realtors and prevent housing discrimination from occurring. Previously, Cosenza also began a one day fair housing training program to teach Realtors how to identify and correct situations where equal access to housing has been compromised by the action of others. Under her leadership at the Orange County Association of Realtors, fair housing classes have been brought to more than 860 real estate professionals.

State Farm Insurance was selected as the winner of the Fair Housing Leadership Award in the Lending category for their long standing record of supporting fair housing education and their work to ensure

that every

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person has the right to achieve the dream of homeownership. State Farm was chosen because they have a long standing record of supporting and advocating for the Fair Housing Council's programs and services. State Farm Insurance encourages and allows its employees to serve as volunteer board members for the Fair Housing Council and continually supports the agency's Homebuyer Educational program. In addition, State Farm is committed to serving many underserved populations, such as African-American, Latino, Asian, new immigrant and low income home buyers by offering insurance programs and supporting educational programs geared specifically to reach these underserved communities.

April is National Fair Housing Month and the Awards Luncheon is just one way the Fair Housing Council of Orange County celebrates this important month. The Fair Housing County sincerely thanks all sponsors for making the event possible. Sponsors of the event included Platinum Sponsors: First American, the Orange County Association of Realtors and the Orange County Register – Rental Division; Gold Sponsors: Apartment Association of Orange County, Arnel Property Management, PI&I Management, State Farm Insurance; Silver Sponsors: Lyon Apartment Companies, Sares Regis Group, South Coast Apartment Association, Villa del Sol Apartments, Wells Fargo; and Bronze Sponsors: For Rent Media Solutions, L'Abri Management, Satellite Property Management and Standard Pacific Homes.

About the Fair Housing Council of Orange County

The Fair Housing Council of Orange County is a private non-profit organization formed in 1965 in the wake of the civil rights movement that resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The agency incorporated in 1968, the same year that Congress extended civil rights protections to cover housing with the adoption of the Fair Housing Act. Under the direction of a 12-member volunteer board of directors and with a paid staff of 16, it works to fulfill a mission of protecting the quality of life in Orange County by ensuring equal access to housing opportunities, fostering diversity and preserving dignity and human rights. Contracting with all of Orange County's local governments to provide fair housing services for their residents, the agency provides comprehensive community education, individual counseling, mediation, low-cost advocacy and handles more than 1,000 issues concerning housing discrimination in the county each year. The Fair Housing Council also offers comprehensive educational programs for housing providers, property managers, lenders, real estate professionals and consumers. The Fair Housing Council is also a HUD-certified housing counseling agency and provides about 275 community outreach presentations annually. For more information, call 800/698-FAIR or 714/569-0823 or visit www.fairhousingoc.org.

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