

2022 ROOSEVELT LEADERSHIP AWARDS PRESENTED TO CLYBURN, BURGESS, KILDEE, MCCAUL, ARRINGTON & LAHOOD

7th annual awards celebration also featured visits to the Presidential Libraries
of Lyndon Baines Johnson & George H.W. Bush

WASHINGTON, DC – At a dinner this past Thursday in Austin, Texas, The Ripon Society and Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange honored six members of Congress with the 2022 Roosevelt Leadership Award, an honor that is presented in the spirit of America’s 26th President and is intended to recognize leaders who today embody some of the same qualities and characteristics that Theodore Roosevelt displayed throughout his life and career.

“The Roosevelt Award was established with one premise in mind,” stated Jim Conzelman, the President & CEO of Ripon and Franklin in remarks to open the dinner. “Namely, there is a lot of good, thoughtful work being done on Capitol Hill and in Washington that people do not regularly hear about. With trust in government at an all-time low, we believe it is important that Americans not only learn about this work, but learn more about the individuals who are responsible for getting it done. To that end, the Roosevelt Leadership Award honors those leaders:

“Who have a sense of duty and service driven by a love of country.

“Who possess a desire to do what is in the best interests of the American people – regardless of party, and regardless of who gets the credit; and,

“Who embody the qualities that Theodore Roosevelt spoke of when he said: ‘The credit belongs to those who are actually in the arena, who strive valiantly; who know the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spend themselves in a worthy cause; who at best know the triumph of high achievement; and who, at worst, if they fail, fail while daring greatly, so that their place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.’

“The six leaders we honor tonight embody these qualities and more. Between them, they have over 100 years of service at every level of government. Individually, they have made their mark in many important ways.”

This year’s Roosevelt Award honorees include: U.S. Rep. James E. Clyburn (D-SC); U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX); U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee (D-MI); U.S. Rep. Michael Burgess, M.D. (R-TX); U.S. Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-TX); and, U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood (R-IL). In their remarks accepting the award, all six members touched on their

respective backgrounds and careers and some of the key efforts they are working on in Congress today. They also echoed a common theme – the importance of Republicans and Democrats making the effort to better know one another so they are better able to solve the challenges we face as a nation.

“We are but the sum total of our experiences,” Clyburn stated in accepting the Roosevelt Award. “What we have to do in my opinion is to learn to respect the experiences of each and every one with whom we come into contact. Because each and every one of us will have a different set of

experiences, and those experiences make us who we are.”

“I remember the words of John F. Kennedy in his Inaugural Address when he called on every American to, ‘Ask what you can do for your country,’” Burgess said in accepting his award. “We’ll have our fights, and we’ll have our political differences. But if we work together and keep our eye over the horizon, we can deliver for our country.”

“This is a great country populated by good people who come from different experiences,” Kildee said in his acceptance speech. “We ought to celebrate those differences, not demonize those differences. If there’s one thing I want to do, it’s lower the temperature a little bit. We have so much more in common than we have that divides us.”

“You can’t really get anything done unless you’re willing to work across the aisle,” McCaul stated. “We have so much more in common than the American people know. They just don’t see it because the media exploits the divisions. The best thing we can do is work together to hand down a better America. I believe we can do that, and we need to do that, not for Republicans or Democrats, but for all Americans.”



Ripon/Franklin President & CEO Jim Conzelman (far right) stands with 2022 Roosevelt Leadership Award Honorees (l to r): Michael McCaul, Michael Burgess, Darin LaHood, James E. Clyburn, Dan Kildee, and Jodey Arrington.

“I plan on being an impassioned advocate for the things I think are good and right for this country,” Arrington said in accepting the Roosevelt Leadership Award. “We’ll have differences and disagreements. But I am committed to changing the culture and the tone so that we can have a climate where we can build relationships and maybe even some friendships, which will make the goal of good governance easier to achieve.”

“I’m a proud, conservative Republican,” LaHood said upon accepting the sixth and final award of the evening. “But our democracy is predicated on working together. And we have to find that common ground. My colleagues said it much better than me on how you have to do that. And I just want to congratulate all them on their awards.”

This is the seventh year the Roosevelt Leadership Awards have been presented. Last year’s awards dinner was held in Charlottesville, Virginia and included visits to Thomas Jefferson’s home at Monticello, and the home where James and Dolly Madison lived at Montpelier. The 2019 awards celebration was held at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston, while the 2018 awards were presented at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, California. The 2017 celebration was held in New York and included visits to Theodore Roosevelt’s historic home at Sagamore Hill and Franklin Roosevelt’s estate and museum in Hyde Park. In 2016, the awards celebration was held at the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas, Texas, while the inaugural Roosevelt Awards in 2015 were held at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California, and included a visit to Rancho del Cielo, President Reagan’s historic ranch atop the Santa Ynez Mountain range northwest of Santa Barbara.

In keeping with this tradition of visiting a Presidential library or museum, Conzelman noted that this year’s awards celebration also featured visits to the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum in Austin and the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station.

“These two leaders couldn’t be more different in temperament,”

Conzelman noted in his remarks. “Lyndon Baines Johnson could be loud and boisterous and was known for literally buttonholing people by the lapels to persuade them to vote for a favored project or program. George Herbert Walker Bush was known for being just the opposite, someone who relied on his quiet powers of persuasion – both in person and through his handwritten notes – to win someone’s support.

“Although different in temperament and political party, both LBJ and HW shared a love of country and a belief in public service that not only defined their time in office, but shaped their outlook on life. We are gathered here tonight in Austin to honor six leaders who share these same qualities. They are of different temperaments. And they come from different parties. But they all share the same love of country and belief in public service that set President Johnson and President Bush apart as great leaders. It is in the spirit of that leadership we present the 2022 Roosevelt Leadership Awards.”

The Ripon Society is a public policy organization that was founded in 1962 and takes its name from the town where the Republican Party was born in 1854 – Ripon, Wisconsin. One of the main goals of The Ripon Society is to promote the ideas and principles that have made America great and contributed to the GOP’s success. These ideas include keeping our nation secure, keeping taxes low and having a federal government that is smaller, smarter and more accountable to the people.

The Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange is a non-partisan, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization committed to enhancing global understanding of important international issues. The Franklin Center brings together Members of the U.S. Congress and their international parliamentary counterparts as well as experts from the Diplomatic corps, foreign officials, senior private sector representatives, scholars, and other public policy experts. Through regular conferences and events where leading international opinion leaders share ideas, the Franklin Center promotes enlightened, balanced, and unbiased international policy discussion on major international issues.

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