

Media Contact:

Mike Snyder, (202) 418-0997
michael.snyder@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

**FCC ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF CHAIRMAN’S AWARDS FOR
ADVANCEMENTS IN ACCESSIBILITY**

***Individuals to Be Honored for Lifetime Contributions as Commission Celebrates the
10th Anniversary of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act***

WASHINGTON, October 7, 2020—The FCC today announced the 2020 winners of the Chairman’s Awards for Advancements in Accessibility (Chairman’s AAA). This FCC program, which began in 2011, is focused on improving access to telecommunications and technology for people with disabilities.

Those being honored this year are national thought leaders whose sustained excellence throughout their careers has served to advance the cause of accessibility. The award winners for 2020 are: telecommunications attorney Karen Peltz Strauss, Executive Director Emeritus of Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Inc. (TDI) Claude L. Stout, and Tom Wlodkowski, Vice President of Accessibility and Multicultural Technology and Product at Comcast Corporation.

The awards will be presented during the FCC’s 10th anniversary celebration of the [Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act](#) (CVAA) on Thursday, October 8. The virtual event will be livestreamed at [fcc.gov/live](https://www.fcc.gov/live) beginning at 2:00 p.m. with a panel discussion exploring the progress that has been made since the CVAA’s passage in 2010 and the challenges that remain. Following a short break, the awards ceremony to honor the 2020 Chairman’s AAA winners will begin at 3:15 p.m.

The panel will feature the FCC’s Diane Burstein, Deputy Chief, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB); Suzy Rosen Singleton, Chief, CGB Disability Rights Office (DRO); Will Schell, Attorney-Advisor, DRO; and the co-chairs of the Disability Advisory Committee, Isidore Niyongabo and Brian Scarpelli.

This year’s Chairman’s AAA honors individuals who have made lasting and impactful contributions to the advancement of accessible communications technologies and services in the fields of policy, advocacy, research, and design. While in previous years the Chairman’s AAA has honored emerging and innovative technologies, this year’s awards recognize Americans committed to making “rapid, efficient nationwide communication service” available to all individuals.

About the Winners

Karen Peltz Strauss is a trailblazer whose decades-long career advocating for accessible technology for consumers includes many years as a public servant at the FCC. She has contributed to landmark legislation that has advanced equality in telecommunications access, including Sections 255 and 305 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (requiring

telecommunications access and television captioning), Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act (mandating relay services), the Decoder Circuitry Act of 1990, and the CVAA.

Claude L. Stout's work spans technological generations, from TDI's iconic work distributing its "Blue Book" of TTY numbers, to his efforts with the Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT) advocating for and helping to develop the CVAA. Prior to his time at TDI, he worked on behalf of people with disabilities at the state level in North Carolina and Missouri. Throughout his career, he worked collaboratively with industry stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes for consumers, and participated in numerous advisory groups and committees, panels, and conferences.

Tom Wlodkowski has been innovating for people with disabilities for 30 years. Prior to joining Comcast, Mr. Wlodkowski served as the Director of Accessibility at AOL for more than 10 years and held positions at the WGBH Media Access Group, home to the Descriptive Video Service, Caption Center and the National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM). His accomplishments include overseeing the development of a talking television guide that revolutionized access to video programming for people who are blind or visually impaired. He has been a tireless advocate for increased access to video programming, Internet/broadband, and connected technologies.

More Information

For more information about the event on October 8, visit: <https://www.fcc.gov/news-events/events/2020/10/fcc-honor-10th-anniversary-accessibility-act>.

For questions or inquiries about the Chairman's AAA, contact Deandrea Wilson (202-391-6266), Chantal Virgile (202-418-0056) or call the ASL Consumer Support Line at 1-844-432-2275 via videophone. Inquiries may also be sent to ChairmansAAA@fcc.gov. For more information about the Chairman's AAA, visit: <https://www.fcc.gov/chairmansaaa>.

###

Media Relations: (202) 418-0500 / ASL: (844) 432-2275 / Twitter: @FCC / www.fcc.gov

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).