



Philip J. Rutledge Social Equity Leadership Award

25th Annual Social Equity Leadership Conference

May 28 - 30, 2026

The NAPA Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance focuses on issues of fairness, justice, and equity in all dimensions of public service. In 2021, the Panel established the **Philip J. Rutledge Social Equity Leadership Award** in recognition of the contributions of Philip J. Rutledge.

With this award, the Panel honors Rutledge's commitment to social equity. His visionary leadership and unceasing efforts were a catalyst for making social equity one of the pillars of public administration. His work was instrumental in infusing social equity into the curriculum of accredited MPA programs.

Academy Fellow Philip J. Rutledge (1925-2007) was a Professor at the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University and at Howard University. Among his many professional accomplishments, he was President of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) as well as a senior official in the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National League of Cities, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The Award winner will be selected based on exceptional contributions to the NAPA Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance and to social equity in public administration. Nominees must be an elected NAPA Fellow *in good standing* and must have served on the Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance for *at least five years*. Nominees must demonstrate commitment to fairness, justice, and equity through their efforts to achieve social change by developing and promoting concrete actions with lasting impact.

To date, we have selected four winners. The inaugural award winner was [Dr. Blue Wooldridge](#), Professor Emeritus at the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Immediate Past Chair of the NAPA Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance. The second winner was [Dr. Gail Christopher](#), Executive Director of the National Collaborative for Health Equity and Academy Fellow. In 2023, the third winner was [Dr. Susan Gooden](#), Dean and Professor at the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University. In 2024, the fourth winner was [Dr. Charles E. Menifield](#), University Professor at the School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) at Rutgers University-Newark.

The announcement of this year's winner of the **Philip J. Rutledge Social Equity Leadership Award** will be made at the 2026 Social Equity Leadership Conference, cohosted by Rutgers University - Newark and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. The winner's biography and photograph will be published on the NAPA website. Nominations for the Philip J. Rutledge Social Equity Leadership Award will be accepted until **March 15, 2026**.

To submit a nomination, please complete the form below. Describe your candidate's commitment to fostering social equity, level of engagement in the Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance, and impact on social equity in public service.

Your Name	
Your Professional Title	
Nominee's Name	
Professional Title	
Institution/Organization	
Email Address	
Phone Number	

In 500 words or less, describe your nominee's commitment to fostering social equity and describe your candidate's level of engagement in the NAPA Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance.

In 250 words or less, describe the impact that your candidate has had on social equity in public service.

Submit your completed nomination form to the 2026 Rutledge Award Selection Committee at selc@napawash.org. For more information about the 25th Annual Social Equity in Leadership Conference, please visit the NAPA website at [2026 Social Equity Leadership Conference - National Academy of Public Administration](#). Thank you for helping us identify the next **Philip J. Rutledge Social Equity Leadership Award** winner!