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Harlem YMCA honors Lester Strong, VP & CEO of AARP Experience Corps at 44th Annual Black Achievers in Industry Awards Ceremony

Washington, D.C. (March 21, 2014) – AARP today announced that Lester Strong, vice president and CEO of AARP Experience Corps was honored for his commitment to community service at the **Harlem YMCA** 44th Annual National Salute to Black Achievers in Industry (bai) Awards Ceremony. The event was held March 20 at the New York Marriott Marquis Hotel.

Lester Strong was the recipient of this year's Leo B. Marsh Award for his work with AARP Experience Corps, a national program that engages adults 50-plus in providing literacy coaching and caring attention for elementary school students.

"We are extremely proud that Lester Strong has received the Leo B. Marsh Award for his unparalleled dedication to improving the lives of others, while at the same time connecting the generations to help them succeed," said AARP CEO A. Barry Rand. "Under Lester's direction, AARP Experience Corps developed a unique approach resulting in a significant gain in reading skills, increased attendance and fewer disciplinary problems among children from kindergarten through third grade. The program helps also to enhance the lives of its older adult volunteers by engaging them in meaningful and rewarding community service."

Since 1971, Annual Black Achievers in Industry Awards Ceremony has celebrated black achievers in industry, both for their corporate leadership and for their service to the community and has helped foster professional development and networking opportunities among honorees.

The annual event convenes the Harlem YMCA, corporations, and local organizations to promote their collective efforts to cultivate and provide quality mentoring programs, scholarships, and other opportunities to support the development of tomorrow's black leaders and professionals. For more than four decades, these endeavors have been instrumental in nurturing future leaders among the youth and teens of New York City's historic and diverse Harlem community.

"The Black Achievers in Industry program is critical to the Harlem community and its youth in providing mentoring programs, college scholarships, college tours, corporate internships and year-round community outreach," says Tiffeny Forrest, Vice President of Operations, YMCA of Greater New York. "Each year the bai gala recognizes exceptional black leaders across the United States and celebrates our corporate partners who support this incredible program. This gala is our way of saying 'thank you' to the leaders and organizations who make all of that possible."

Joyce Roche, author and former CEO of Girls, Incorporated, provided the keynote address, drawing from her experience as a trailblazer in the corporate world for over 25 years. Other distinguished honorees included **Jim Gordon**, Group Vice President, Corporate Brand & Reputation, who received this year's Deloitte Corporate Community Award on behalf of Time Warner Cable.

For the fourth year in a row, **DeMarco Morgan**, Atlanta-based news anchor for WXIA-TV, NBC, served as the evening's master of ceremonies. Recording artist **Alyson Williams** provided entertainment for this year's gala attendees, which in the past have included luminaries such as Bill Cosby, Oprah Winfrey, Star Jones, and Al Roker, making this event a major date on New York's social calendar.

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About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions

to political campaigns or candidates. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.

About the YMCA of Greater New York

The YMCA of Greater New York is, and always will be, dedicated to building healthy, confident, connected and secure children, adults, families and communities. With a focus on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, the Y nurtures the potential of every youth and teen, improves New York City's health and well-being and provides opportunities to give back and support neighbors. In scores of neighborhoods across the five boroughs and its camp upstate, the Y makes accessible the support and opportunities that empower more than 400,000 New Yorkers to learn, grow and thrive. Visit ymcanyc.org.

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