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IGLTA Announces Annual Travel Honors
Global association celebrates trailblazers of LGBT tourism at L.A. convention

Fort Lauderdale, FL (10 February 2015)—The 32nd Annual Global Convention of the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association in Los Angeles (8-11 April) is the LGBT tourism industry's premier networking and educational event, and also an opportunity to acknowledge the work of individuals and businesses that have improved the landscape of gay and lesbian travel.

The IGLTA board of directors selects the award recipients from the association's member businesses in 80 countries and its allies. "It's our way to celebrate the incredible work being done to make the world more welcoming for LGBT people," says IGLTA Chair Dan Melesurgo. "This year's diverse recipients are located in Curaçao, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Colombia, but their outreach extends far beyond the borders of their home countries, reflecting the truly global scope of our association."

- *Hanns Ebensten Hall of Fame Award*: Since 1990, **Olivia**, the travel company for lesbians, has taken over 200,000 women on cruise, resort, adventure and riverboat vacations all over the world, including Antarctica. Olivia always charters entire ships or buys out whole resorts to provide a safe space for women to be out.
- *Community Honor* (based in IGLTA's convention host city): **The Los Angeles LGBT Center** traces its roots to 1969 when its founders first offered client services. Today, with more than 450 employees and 3,000 volunteers, the center is the world's largest provider of programs and services for LGBT people and a member of the Clinton Global Initiative.
- *Destination Pioneer*: **The Curaçao Tourist Board** put this island in the Dutch Caribbean on the map for LGBT travel with its "Live and Let Live" philosophy and the 2004 launch of GayCuracao.com. Curaçao has created several LGBT marketing campaigns and continues to make strides in equality for the gay community in an effort to become one of the most welcoming destinations for LGBT travelers in the Caribbean – a region that often makes headlines for homophobia
- *LGBT Event Pioneer*: **Doug Swallow** is the founder of Gay Day at Disney, which began with a small LGBT group wearing red shirts to the Magic Kingdom in Orlando on the first Saturday in June and evolved into a multi-day commercial event that attracts upwards of 100,000 LGBT travelers to Central Florida.

- *Networking:* **Cámara de Comerciantes LGBT de Colombia (the Colombia LGBT Chamber of Commerce)** was created in 2012 in recognition of the country's emerging LGBT market. The group collaborates with the local government as well as national chambers in the U.S. and Argentina to provide support to local LGBT businesses and host the annual WeTrade Business Summit in Bogotá.
- *Travel Writer:* In a career spanning 14 years in both mainstream and LGBT travel media **Jurriaan Teulings** has extensively traveled in some 80+ countries, breaking stereotypes along the way. His official home is Amsterdam, but he spends 8-10 months a year on the road, where he has shimmied with Interpol-listed fugitive chicken thieves and chummed up with Indian royalty in his commitment to telling authentic, unexpected stories.

In addition, the IGLTA staff honors a member of our volunteer ambassador team for their outstanding contributions to the association and LGBT tourism.

- *Ambassador of the Year:* **Jonathan Mountford** is the managing director of the award-winning marketing and PR agency *made*. He represents IGLTA in the U.K., sits on the British Tourism Group and chairs the Americas Interest Group at VisitBritain.

For high-res photos, full bios of the honorees, or interview requests, please contact loann.halden@iglta.org. For more information on the Annual Global Convention, please visit www.igltaconvention.org.

The event would not be possible without the generous support of our convention sponsors. Host City Sponsor – Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board; Presenting Level – Delta Air Lines; South Africa Tourism; Visit West Hollywood; Official Level – GayCities, Tourism Office of Spain, Tourism Toronto/Ontario Tourism, Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater, VisitBritain; Conference Level – Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority, Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, Silversea.

About IGLTA

The International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association is the leading member-based global organization dedicated to LGBT tourism and a proud Affiliate Member of the United Nations World Tourism Organization. In 2013, the association signed on to ECPAT's Tourism Child Protection Code of Conduct to prevent child exploitation. The association's membership includes LGBT and LGBT-friendly accommodations, destinations, service providers, travel agents, tour operators, events and travel media in more than 75 countries. For more information: iglta.org and follow us at facebook.com/IGLTA, twitter.com/iglta and instagram.com/iglta.