



For Immediate Release

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## **Honoring Excellence: Four Prestigious Awards Presented at APH Annual Meeting**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** (October 15, 2025) – American Printing House for the Blind (APH) presented the Wings of Freedom Award, Horizon Award, Navigator Award, and Louis Award during APH's Annual Meeting. The event took place at an in-person ceremony on Wednesday, October 15, at the Louisville Marriott Downtown.

### **Wings of Freedom – Dr. William Wiener**

The Wings of Freedom Award is the highest honor presented by APH. Established to honor individuals who have shown exemplary leadership in the blindness and low vision field, the award is given periodically and only as deserved. This year's recipient is Dr. William Wiener.

"It is truly an honor to receive the prestigious Wings of Freedom Award. I want to thank my mentors and colleagues who contributed greatly to my work in visual impairment and blindness," said Dr. Wiener. "I owe everything to their encouragement and support throughout the years. I am also most grateful to AER, APH and AFB, for giving me the opportunity to work with them in serving children and adults who are blind or have low vision."

Dr. Wiener has served as president of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind (AER); chair of the AER O&M Division; board member of the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB); chair of the AFB Editorial Advisory Board; associate editor of the Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness; chair of the Hall of Fame of Leaders and Legends in the Blindness Field; and chair of the AER Higher Education Accreditation Commission. He recently retired as an Endowed Chair/Professor at North Carolina Central University, holds a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision, master's degrees in Vision Rehabilitation and Audiology, and has served as Department Chair, Dean, and Vice Provost at the university level. Dr. Wiener has published more than seventy journal articles and book chapters and was the lead editor for the fourth edition of the Foundations of Orientation and Mobility textbooks. He currently serves as Associate Executive Editor of The New RE:view.

### **Horizon Award – Ray Kurzweil**

The Horizon Award recognizes individuals who continually pursue innovative ideas that result in the development of products designed to improve the quality of life for people who are blind or low vision. This year's recipient is Ray Kurzweil.

Ray Kurzweil is a world-class inventor, thinker, and futurist with a 36-year track record of accurate predictions. A leader in artificial intelligence for 63 years, he was the principal inventor of the first CCD flat-bed scanner, the first omni-font optical character recognition, the first print-to-speech reading machine for the blind, the first text-to-speech synthesizer, the first music synthesizer capable of recreating the grand piano and other orchestral instruments, and the first commercially marketed large-vocabulary speech recognition software.

Ray has won a Grammy; honored with the National Medal of Technology; has been inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame; and has 21 honorary Doctorates. His latest book, *The Singularity Is Nearer*, debuted at #4 on the *New York Times* Best Seller list. He served as a Director of Engineering and later Principal Researcher and AI Visionary at Google for 13 years. There, he developed an AI model that conversed in natural language with 100,000 books, a landmark precursor to today's large language models.

### **Navigator Award – VisionServe Alliance**

The Navigator Award honors the collaborative efforts and partnerships that break down barriers and create pathways for individuals to have full access to education and life. This year, the award recipient is VisionServe Alliance. Lee Nasehi, President and CEO of VisionServe Alliance, accepted the award on the company's behalf.

"Collaboration has always been part of my personal work style and embodies the mission of VisionServe Alliance. Founded by a group of chief executives, VisionServe has spent almost 40 years fostering relationships, establishing partnerships, and supporting thousands of leaders in our field," said Nasehi. "It's such an honor to connect brilliant leaders and receive this award, celebrating the crucial role leadership and collaboration play in eliminating barriers and expanding access for all."

Nasehi dedicated her career to advancing vision-specific services for people with blindness and low vision, and has led VisionServe Alliance since 2019, following nearly 20 years as President and CEO of Lighthouse Central Florida and Lighthouse Works. A nationally recognized leader and visionary, her work is deeply personal as the mother of an adult son who is blind with additional disabilities. Among her notable achievements is the creation of Lighthouse Works, a nonprofit social enterprise that employs people with vision loss while supporting its parent organization's mission to empower individuals to live, learn, and earn with dignity and independence.

### **Louis Award – Cleanlogic**

The Louis Award, named after Louis Braille, honors products, ideas, or efforts that significantly increase the availability or awareness of braille and tactile graphics. This award is given only when an initiative truly inspires action and creativity. This year, the award winner is Cleanlogic. Isaac Shapiro, Co-CEO and President of Cleanlogic, accepted the award on the company's behalf.

Cleanlogic is a bath and skincare accessories brand committed to accessibility. Shapiro is also the Founder of the Inspiration Foundation, a nonprofit aiming to boost employment for people with disabilities by 10%. Since founding Cleanlogic in 2006, Shapiro has grown it into a leading brand with national distribution at Walmart, Amazon, Nordstrom, and more. The company features braille on packaging and employs individuals with disabilities in its U.S. assembly facilities. A portion of Cleanlogic's profits supports the Inspiration Foundation, which strives to increase employment for people with disabilities from 37% to 47%. Shapiro's work has reshaped the personal care industry while normalizing disability hiring, proving it benefits both business and society. His efforts have been highlighted on Good Morning America, Forbes, NBC Nightly News, and beyond.

#### **About American Printing House for the Blind**

American Printing House for the Blind is a worldwide leader in designing innovative lifelong learning solutions for children and adults who are blind or low vision. In this fast-changing world, we believe in the power and necessity of learning to open the doors to educational success, satisfying employment, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal well-being. We level the learning playing field by providing specialized technology, materials, products, and services that are essential for education and life. American Printing House for the Blind is headquartered at 1839 Frankfort Avenue in Louisville, Kentucky. For more information, please visit [www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org).

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