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Contact: Karen Willard
301-587-2781/Karen.Willard@navasa.org

Honorees Named for NAVASA's Annual Recognition Banquet

Washington D.C. — NAVASA proudly announces honorees at its annual Recognition Banquet on July 16, 2005, along with NAVASA's National Conference in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area. The conference and banquet serve to mark NAVASA's tenth anniversary of service to Vietnamese American communities. The Recognition Banquet, with its focus on honoring individuals and organizations who give back to the community, complements the theme of this year's National Conference, "*Empowering the Community through Giving.*" To be recognized are ten recipients of NAVASA's National Young Community Leaders Recognition Award and four honorees – Ms. Khuc Minh Tho, Mr. Shep Lowman, Dr. Nguyen Dinh Thang, , and Mr. Lionel Rosenblatt.

Ms. Khuc Minh Tho, President of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, has tirelessly advocated in obtaining the release of prisoners in Vietnamese reeducation centers, with the goal of resettling the prisoners in the third country of their choice. She was the driving force behind the humanitarian orderly (a.k.a. H.O.) departure of hundreds of thousands of former political prisoners and their families.

Dr. Nguyen Dinh Thang currently serves as the Executive Director of Boat People S.O.S. Since 1998, he has built Boat People S.O.S. from a small organization with one half-time staff into a nationally recognized organization with 14 branch offices and an annual budget of \$4 million.

Additionally, Mr. Lionel Rosenblatt and Mr. Shep Lowman will be recognized for their invaluable contributions to refugees. Both dedicated themselves to ensuring the resettlement of thousands of refugees to the United States and, in particular, resettled 18,000 Vietnamese refugees through the Resettlement of Vietnamese Returnees program and developed numerous programs that provided refugees with post-resettlement services.

"This year marks a historic celebration of 30 years of remarkable journeys and resettlements of Vietnamese Americans," stated Huy Bui, NAVASA Executive Director, "these four individuals have truly exemplified giving through rescuing and serving the Vietnamese refugees and have made an enormous impact and difference to thousands of Vietnamese Americans."

In addition to honoring individual contributions, this year NAVASA has added two distinguished awards to local organizations that demonstrate dedication and excellence in improving the lives of their community members.

Chosen to be the Master and Mistress of Ceremony is Mr. Nguyen Nam Loc, Director of Immigration and Refugee Department at Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and Ms. Sherri Ly, a reporter with WTTG/FOX 5 News in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area.

The Recognition Banquet will begin at 6 p.m. on Saturday, July 16, 2005, at the Hilton McLean Tyson's Corner. Banquet entertainment will be provided by the musical sensation of Pham Duc Thanh, Montreal-based multi-instrumentalist known as one of the world's leading exponents of traditional Vietnamese music, and a benefit auction which will help NAVASA continue its mission of empowering Vietnamese American communities across the United States.

For more information on the recognition banquet and national conference registration, please visit our website at www.navasa.org.

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