Gala Honors Road Safety Leaders, Raises Critical Funds to Improve Travelers' Safety on the World's Roads

More than 170 attendees from the diplomatic community, corporations and government and non-governmental road safety organizations, as well as national and international road safety experts and community members, joined together at ASIRT’s 23rd annual Gala, *Leaders in Road Safety: where the Rubber Meets the Road*. The event celebrated ASIRT’s accomplishments and leadership in road safety while providing an opportunity to network, dine, bid on a record number of exciting raffle prizes and honor six outstanding individuals for their commitment to road safety.

The Gala is ASIRT’s primary fundraiser and facilitates key road safety initiatives and the development and distribution of Road Travel Reports and other safety information for employees, study abroad students and individual travelers. To help ASIRT make an impact on improving road safety, [donate now](#).

**Rochelle Sobel**, ASIRT founder and President, welcomed guests and highlighted key ASIRT successes over the past year including the inaugural *Safe Travel and Tourism Summit* convened by ASIRT last May under the sponsorship of Senator Chris Van Hollen, the FIA Foundation and Point Comfort Underwriters. The Summit successfully assembled ambassadors, State Department representatives, The World Bank, Congressional staff, members of academia and the medical community, and travel journalists to share successes and challenges and delineate future policies and initiatives they seek to institute to further protect American travelers on the world’s roads. She also called attention to the increased and broadened distribution of ASIRT’s country-specific Road Travel Reports, now numbering detailed reports for 97 countries, to provide more travelers with necessary tools to make informed travel decisions.

Following Sobel’s remarks, she called on **H. Randall Morgan, Jr.**, ASIRT Board Member and CEO of Morgan Language Services, to serve as Master of Ceremonies for the evening. He kicked off the program by introducing the Keynote Speaker **Jennifer Homendy**, member of the National Transportation Safety Board.
Homendy described NTSB’s focus on investigating major transportation disasters to prevent future incidents and save lives. “The NTSB’s goal is zero—zero fatalities, zero injuries and zero crashes,” said Homendy. “The most important part of the NTSB’s job is taking safety recommendations and making sure they are implemented to prevent death.”

Following Homendy’s address, Morgan facilitated the awards presentation during which six truly impressive individuals were recognized for their accomplishments and commitment to improving road safety. The 2019 ASIRT honorees are:

**Her Excellency Karin Olofsdotter**, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to the United States of America, received the *ASIRT Diplomatic Leadership in Road Safety Award*.

**Andrew C. Blair**, President and CEO of Colonial Parking, Inc., received the *ASIRT Corporate Conscience Award*.

**Dr. Jasminka Goldoni Laestadius**, Senior Occupational Health Specialist in the Health and Safety Directorate at the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund, received the *ASIRT Road Safety Champion Award*.

**Robert Strassburger**, Vice President of Vehicle Safety & Harmonization at the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, Inc., received the *ASIRT Global Corporate Leadership Award*.

**Nira Berry**, Motivational Speaker, Life Coach, and Founder of Laughing Rx Wellness Programs, received the *ASIRT Community Leadership Award*.

**David Feinman**, Government Affairs Director at the Conservation Lands Foundation, received the *Aron Sobel Guardian Award*.

View the [program booklet](#) for additional event details. If you missed the Gala, it’s not too late to [donate](#).

L-R: Robert Strassburger, Randy Morgan, Andy Koblenz; aerial of the beautiful Carnegie Institution for Science; Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, Inc. colleagues