In 1968, on the 30th anniversary of the Wagner-O’Day Act, the NIB Board of Directors created the Peter J. Salmon Employee of the Year Award to honor those employees who excel in their positions at NIB associated agencies. Dr. Salmon was instrumental in advocating passage of the Wagner-O’Day Act of 1938 and the subsequent formation of NIB. This award recognizes the outstanding work and achievements of people who are blind working at NIB associated agencies across the country.
SALMON NOMINEES

LINDA AUDAIN

Chicago Lighthouse Industries
Chicago, Illinois
An assembler/packer at Chicago Lighthouse Industries, Linda is known for her steadfast commitment to the agency’s mission and as a kind, thoughtful, and hard-working team member. A member of the agency’s event committee, Linda participated in the Orcam device program and the Chicago Lighthouse Work Adjustment program.

JULIA BARGER

North Central Sight Services
Williamsport, Pennsylvania
Since joining North Central Sight Services in 1987, Julia has held positions from front desk clerk and general assembler to her current role as an ISO:9001 certified shipping team leader. An all-around excellent employee, Julia truly cares about her coworkers and the quality of the work they produce together.

WILLIE FAYE BARROW

Alabama Industries for the Blind
Talladega, Alabama
A clerk at the AbilityOne Base Supply Center® (BSC) at Fort Rucker since the store opened 15 years ago, Faye is a favorite because she exudes warmth and takes care to help customers find the specialty items they need. She is also dedicated to letting customers know the importance of buying AbilityOne.
ROBERT BROWN
Alphapointe
Kansas City, Missouri
Originally hired as a teleservices representative, Robert’s IT expertise has enabled the contact center to launch new projects and grow its business. Certified in Job Access with Speech (JAWS) and Section 508 compliance, he was a key player in launching a new line of business for Alphapointe.

MILTON CLYBURN
Lions Services
Charlotte, North Carolina
An accomplished machine operator at Lions Services, Milton’s ability to inspire coworkers through positive encouragement has earned their respect and admiration, as reflected in their overwhelming approval in his selection as the agency’s 2021 Employee of the Year.

ALEX CURTIS
Outlook Nebraska
Omaha, Nebraska
A 10-year employee of Outlook Nebraska, Alex sees the good in people and encourages others to do the same. As a finisher, Alex leads by example and doesn’t shy away from hard work or tough challenges. He is working to establish a vending business to fulfill his goal of being self-employed.
MARK DUDLEY

West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
San Angelo, Texas
Currently working in hand assembly, Mark has also served as an office clerk and as a logistics clerk. Mark worked at the BSC at Goodfellow Air Force Base until deteriorating eyesight made working the cash register too difficult. He has a bachelor’s degree in business from Angelo State University.

HERBERTH GALAN

San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind
San Antonio, Texas
A machine operator, Herberth has sewn chin straps for the Marines and combat jackets and extreme weather pants for the Army during his 15 years at San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind. He appreciates the ability to learn on the job and plans to stay at the Lighthouse and continue learning.

ALBERTO GONZALES

Travis Association for the Blind
Austin, Texas
When not performing his own duties, Alberto, who is DeafBlind, can be found training new hires on the correct way to perform their assigned duties at Travis Association for the Blind. Before joining the agency in January 2020, Alberto spent 11 years with The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc., in Seattle.
SANDY HARDING

Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

After years working in administrative positions, Sandy joined the agency in 2016 because retirement didn’t suit her. Known for her thirst for knowledge, Sandy has taken numerous computer training and business classes, and serves as the agency’s resident braille-est, making sure internal documents are accessible for all employees.

DENNIS HICKS

Lions Volunteer Blind Industries
Morristown, Tennessee

Currently a sewing machine operator, Dennis joined Lions Volunteer Blind Industries in 2015 and has worked in several capacities at the agency’s Johnson City location. A dedicated employee, he performs every job to the best of his ability. Active in his community, Dennis previously served as a city commissioner.

NICHOLAS HLIFKA

Visually Impaired Advancement (VIA)
Buffalo, New York

Native New Yorker Nick joined VIA as an information and referral specialist. A conscientious employee, Nick takes time to determine needs and provide callers with appropriate community resources. A remote employee in North Carolina, he often checks out new software and provides instructions for other users who are blind.
JIMMIE JOHNSON

Louisiana Association for the Blind
Shreveport, Louisiana
Hired as a palletizer in 2017, Jimmie excelled in his position at the Louisiana Association for the Blind and was quickly promoted to the ream accumulator role where he continues to enhance his knowledge and skills. Jimmie’s goals are to become a wrapper, a role usually held by sighted employees, and a trainer.

JAMES JONES

Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany
Albany, New York
James, who joined the agency in 2018, has worked on many federal and state contracts, taking a lead role and training coworkers in document preparation, inspection, and tagging. In 2020, he was nominated for Employee of the Year for the New York State Preferred Source Program for New Yorkers Who Are Blind.

DAVID JUSTICE

Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Cincinnati, Ohio
Adaptable, professional, and positive, Dave played a fundamental role in keeping agency doors open during the pandemic. He even changed shifts to ensure the agency could continue supplying essential items while maintaining social distancing to keep fellow employees safe.
BETTY LAU

Associated Industries for the Blind
Milwaukee Wisconsin
Hired in 2002 as a part-time customer service specialist at the BSC at the San Francisco Veterans Affairs facility BSC, Betty was quickly offered a full-time position. Currently the assistant store manager at the BSC in Alameda, California, Betty’s great attention to detail ensures the store is organized and items are easy for customers to find.

JOSE LEAL

Envision
Wichita, Kansas
A machine operator at Envision, Jose is known for his excellent production and product quality, and his extensive knowledge of both materials and finished products. As a member of the agency’s employee advisory group, Jose is diligent in representing his coworkers and bringing their ideas to the committee.

KENNETH LHAMON, III

NewView Oklahoma
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Since joining NewView Oklahoma in 2017, Kenny has been extremely dependable, conscientious, hard working, and flexible. Although he works primarily in the hose and hose testing departments, he has the skills and flexibility to also help out in the wheel chocks and vinyl departments.
ERNEST MCCULLOUGH

Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment
Binghamton, New York
Ernest has been an operator on the switchboard contract with the James J. Peters Veterans Affairs Medical Center in the Bronx since 2011. His courtesy, professionalism, consistency, and reliability are appreciated by employees, patients, and patients’ families alike.

DENNIS MCDUFFIE

LCI
Durham, North Carolina
Dennis spent more than 25 years in materials planning and management in the cosmetics industry before joining LCI in May 2015. Currently an assembler in the medical kitting department, he can perform most jobs in the department and oversaw implementation of a voice picking program that helps people who are blind process orders.

STEVE MENDEZ

Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth
Fort Worth, Texas
Steve, who lost his eyesight in 2015 due to glaucoma, joined the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth in 2019 after learning about the agency through the client services department. An assembly employee, Steve has worked on a number of products, and been involved with the North Texas White Cane Day event.
EMILY MERCED

IBVI
West Allis, Wisconsin
Emily joined IBVI in January 2018 as a machine operator. She has been involved in IBVI’s EPIC marketing campaigns, and can be seen on IBVI’s social media pages as well as billboards in the Milwaukee area. In 2019, Emily was named the IBVI manufacturing Employee of the Year.

JEAN MICHEL

Georgia Industries for the Blind
Bainbridge, Georgia
Since joining the agency in 2014, Jean has dedicated his skills and abilities to produce quality goods in support of the agency’s mission. A native of Haiti, he speaks Creole, French, English, and Spanish. Jean earned a certificate in electronics from a technical school before moving to the United States in 2000.

FRED MORGAN

Lighthouse Works
Orlando, Florida
Fred joined Lighthouse Works! in 2011 as a customer care professional and has been instrumental in the growth of the contact center. As a result of his accomplishments both individually and within the team as a subject matter expert, leader, mentor, and trainer, he was promoted to team lead at the beginning of 2021.
MICHAEL NEWMAN

Beyond Vision
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

After working as a public safety officer, Mike joined Beyond Vision in 2013 in assembly and packaging, and advanced to machine shop operator. He consistently brings a positive attitude to work and helps to find solutions. Quiet yet impactful, Mike enhances the culture and environment at Beyond Vision through his actions.

HECTOR NIEVES

VisionCorps
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Since joining VisionCorps in 2017, Hector has worked on many different lines, and was instrumental in getting the agency’s Flight Deck Pad Line up and running. A strategic thinker and problem solver, Hector, who came to VisionCorps from Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, serves on the agency’s safety committee.

TIMOTHY POOLE

Industries of the Blind
Greensboro, North Carolina

Since joining the agency in 2008 as a sewing machine operator, Tim has been promoted several times, working in many areas of the agency. A member the North Carolina Council of the Blind, Tim advocates for people who are blind or visually impaired in addition to serving as a recruiting ambassador for the agency.
HEATHER PRESNAR

Keystone Vocational Services
Hermitage, Pennsylvania
Heather joined Keystone Vocational Services in October 2017 as a general clerk at one of the agency’s secure mail facilities. She has since mastered the ins and outs of all the tasks involved in the contract through hard work, determination, and willingness to learn. Heather currently serves on the agency’s safety committee.

ROSIE REED

East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
Tyler, Texas
Recognizing the strain COVID-19 put on production staff, Rosie willingly transitioned from her customer service role back to a direct labor role to promote team building. Currently vice president of the Tigers beep baseball team, Rosie and the Tigers initiated the Annual Breast Cancer Blind Awareness Day in 2009.

BRENT RICHARDSON

Goodwill of the Finger Lakes
Rochester, New York
Brent, who is also hearing impaired, worked in the agency’s e-commerce department before moving to manufacturing, where he has fully embraced the ISO:9001 quality system. Brent, who has a degree in graphic design, has assisted with a variety of graphic design projects for the agency’s marketing department, including the agency’s Insight newsletters.
CARMEL ROGERS
Lions Industries for the Blind
Kinston, North Carolina
A machine operator at Lions Industries for the Blind, Carmel encourages co-workers to excel and aids them in transitioning to new tasks. An active participant on the employee advisory and safety committees, Carmel provides insight on adaptations to processes and equipment that help employees who are blind succeed.

ROGER SALES
Lighthouse for the Blind
Saint Louis, Missouri
Over the course of more than 10 years at the agency Roger gradually took on increased responsibilities. When the pandemic hit and demand for soap and pine oil increased dramatically, Roger – a graduate of NIB’s Leaders at All Levels program – stepped up to help keep the lines humming.

KARL SCHAEFFLER
The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Seattle, Washington
After joining the Lighthouse in 2008 as a production employee, Karl advanced to senior machinist and then set-up specialist in the easel department. A member of the accessibility and safety committees, for 12 years Karl coordinated the agency’s Tom’s Turkey Drive, raising funds for families in need during the holidays.
MICHELLE SHAW

Beacon Lighthouse
Wichita Falls, Texas
Michelle joined the Beacon Lighthouse in November 2016 and quickly moved up. Today, she can operate any production press in the plant. Michelle wears many hats, chairing the safety committee, serving on the QWE committee, and regularly taking online classes to enhance her computer and business skills.

LAY SHWE

Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Utica, New York
Born in Myanmar, Lay escaped war with her husband and five young children. After seven years in a refugee camp in Thailand, they arrived in the U.S., where Lay overcame the language barrier to land a position as a sewing machine operator and provide a stable home for her family.

ALMA SMITH

Envision Dallas
Dallas, Texas
Alma, who has worked as a machine operator and assembler in the sewing division at Envision Dallas since 1999, is known as an outgoing, hard-working, and dependable employee who goes above and beyond to assist her coworkers. She can always be counted on to make herself available to others who need help.
KARRY SMITH
Lighthouse Louisiana
New Orleans, Louisiana
Karry joined Lighthouse Louisiana in 2019 as a packer and quickly became a Lighthouse Louisiana MVP because of his hard work, self-motivation, and ability to be a true team player. Soon promoted to machine operator, Karry is a natural leader who guides others through empathy, understanding, and kindness.

DIANA-MARIE SOTO
IFB Solutions
Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Diana, who joined IFB Solutions in 2018 as a sewing machine operator, loves to learn and is always willing to try something new. Fluent in both Spanish and English, Diana volunteers to translate during company assemblies so that Spanish-speaking employees are informed of company news. She also enjoys helping Spanish-speakers learn English.

TERRY STRADER
Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Cincinnati, Ohio
Certified in Unified English Braille by the National Blindness Professional Certification Board, Terry is meticulous in the workplace and always pushes himself to improve. Terry’s high-quality work directly ensures that more than 15 million braille pages can be enjoyed by readers all over the world.

ELIZONDRO TORRES
South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
Corpus Christi, Texas
Known at the South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind as not only the fastest riveter at the agency, but also the most prolific, Eli joined the agency in 2006. A recent widower after 42 years of marriage, Eli is a father, grandfather, and great-grandfather who has no plans to retire.
IN MEMORY: CHARLIE FLUKER

Mississippi Industries for the Blind
Meridian, Mississippi

An eight-year employee at the Mississippi Industries for the Blind (MIB) Meridian location, Charlie never let having a disability affect his quality of work or dedication. In addition to being completely blind, Charlie was a double amputee who used prosthetic legs.

As a production employee at MIB, he learned many agency operations and produced a number of different products, including products for the U.S. Forest Service. Before he lost his eyesight, Charlie had a wood pulp truck and ran his own small business, but his first and most enduring calling was as a follower of Christ.

An ordained minister, on Sundays Charlie could often be heard on the WNBN gospel station sharing the word of God. He regularly participated in outreach ministries and visited the Queen City Nursing Home to preach to residents after church services. He was a great lover of gospel music.

Charlie is survived by his wife Mrs. Earthie Fluker; five children: Edward, Lathan, Erica, Charlie Jr., and Courtney; stepchildren Daniel, Danielle, Trenton, Alexis, Raenica, and Raemone; and siblings Maggie Jean, Ruby Jean, Vicky, Michelle, Teresa, Larry, David Lee, Ruffus Lee, Leon, Lawrence, and Rayford.