

PART C. GROUP NOMINATION ONLY (Complete items 1 thru 14)

1. NAME OF GROUP

Mid-South Area Workforce Diversity Committee

2. NAME OF GROUP LEADER

Dr. Edgar G. King

3. PHONETIC NAME SPELLING (if applicable)

4. SEX

Male

5. OFFICIAL DUTY STATION (city & state)

Stoneville, Mississippi

6. LEGAL RESIDENCE (city & state)

Greenville, Mississippi

7. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT NO. 2 of MS.

8. GROUP SIZE

19

Beginning with the group leader's name provide the following information for each of the group members:

AGENCY	NAME (last, first, middle initial)	OFFICIAL POSITION TITLE	FEDERAL GRADE OR SALARY LEVEL	OFFICIAL DUTY STATION (city & state)	SEX
9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
ARS	King Jr., Edgar G.	Area Director	ES-04	Stoneville, MS	M
ARS	Tucker, Archie	Deputy Area Director	GS-15	Stoneville, MS	M
ARS	Jordan, John Patrick	Director	SES-06	New Orleans, LA	M
ARS	Bhatnagar, Deepak	Research Geneticist	GS-15	New Orleans, LA	M
ARS	Shepherd, Betty	Location Admin. Officer	GS-11	Auburn, LA	F
ARS	Acosta, Georgina O.	Program Analyst	GS-7	New Orleans, LA	F
ARS	Alonso, Carlos V.	Sup. Res. Hydraulic Eng.	GS-15	Oxford, MS	M
ARS	Ambrogio, David C.	Biological Lab. Technician	GS-8	New Orleans, LA	M
ARS	Brown, Patricia A	Executive Ass. Area Dir.	GS-9	Stoneville, MS	F
ARS	Cleveland, Thomas E.	Supervisory Microbiologist	GS-15	New Orleans, LA	M
ARS	Duke, Stephen O.	Supervisory Plant Phys.	EST-1	Oxford, MS	M
ARS	Edmund, Anthony	Equal Empl. Manager	GS-13	Athens, GA	M
ARS	Keeling, Rita	Human Res.& Outreach	GS-9	Stoneville, MS	F
ARS	McAlpine, Jimmy R.	Biological Res. Technician	GS-9	Stoneville, MS	M
ARS	McCain, Gay G.	Supervisory Entomologist	GS-9	Miss. State, MS	M
ARS	Smith, Barbara J.	Research Plant Pathologist	GS-14	Poplarville, MS	F
ARS	Villa, Joseph D.	Research Entomologist	GS-12	Baton Rouge, LA	M
ARS	Winston, Patricia J.	Sup. Mgmt. Analyst	GS-11	New Orleans, LA	F
ARS	Wright, Maureen	Research Microbiologist	GS-12	New Orleans, LA	F

PART D. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

During the last 3 years, list all Government or major non-Government monetary and nonmonetary awards and year presented. For all previous USDA Honor Awards, year awarded and name of group, if applicable.

King, Edgar G.: (2001) **Presidential Rank Award (Meritorious)**; (1999, 2000, 2001) USDA Bonus Awards.

Tucker, Archie: (1999) Selected as USDA, REE's Student Employment Program Award winner for demonstrated exceptional accomplishments in achieving the Department's goal for building a qualified, diverse workforce through use and support of student employment; (2000) Selected Parent of the Year for the State of Mississippi for his efforts with the Students in the Leland School District; (2001) Received a Resolution from the Mississippi House of Representatives for his involvement in local schools district; (2002) Received the Distinguished Bayou Supporter's Award from Southern University for his continual support to Southern University's Beginning Agricultural Youth Opportunities Unlimited (BAYOU) Program and for providing an inspirational keynote address at the Bayou Awards and Recognition Program.

Jordan, John P.: (2002) **Presidential Rank Award (Meritorious)**; (2000, 2001, 2002) USDA Bonus awards; (2001) Federal Laboratory Directory of the Year; (2000) Chairman's Award for Combined Federal Campaign for 1999 Campaign; (2002) Semi-finalist for Service to America award; (2000-2002) Presidential Award, Greater New Orleans Agribusiness Council.

Bhatnagar, Deepak: (1995) **U. S. Department of Agriculture Secretary's Honor Award for Equal Employment Opportunity, Citation: for exceptional leadership and initiative in promoting and fostering interpersonal communication across cultures in a diverse workforce within ARS**; (1998) **U. S. Department of Agriculture Secretary's Group Honor Award for Personal and Professional Excellence, Citation: For elimination of aflatoxin, a potent carcinogen, from food and feed supplies, and preventing severe economic losses**; (1999-2002) Outstanding performance Awards, Quality Step increase; (2000) Elected fellow of the American Society for Microbiology; (2002) Cash award for exemplary leadership shown in the completion of the *Aspergillus flavus* EST project having international impact on aflatoxin research; (2002) Cash award for exceptional leadership in organizing the Mid-South Area Leadership Conference.

Shepherd, Betty: (2000, 2001, 2002) Outstanding Performance Award.

Acosta, Georgina O.: (2002) Cash Award for Promotion of Cultural Diversity among USDA employees through preparations of promotional material and presentations at employment conferences for minorities and women; (2002) Cash Award for exceptional Support with the Arrangements for the MSA Leadership Conference; (2001, 2002) Performance Award; (2001) Cash award for exceptional leadership given to the development of the Center's Biobased poster presentation; (2001) Cash Award for Outstanding leadership in Support of Mid South Area Outreach and Workforce Diversity Activities.

Alonso, Carlos V.: (2002) USDA Certificate of Merit for Scientific and Management Leadership.

Ambrogio, David C.: (2000, 2001, 2002) Recognized for leadership on Equal Opportunity Advisory Council, Federal Executive Board of New Orleans.

Brown, Patricia A.: (2000, 2001, and 2002) Performance Award; (2002) Extra Effort Award.

PART D. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

During the last 3 years, list all Government or major non-Government monetary and nonmonetary awards and year presented. For all previous USDA Honor Awards, year awarded and name of group, if applicable.

Cleveland, Thomas E.: (1998) **U. S. Department of Agriculture Secretary's Honor Award For Personal and Professional Excellence. Citation: for elimination of aflatoxin, a potent carcinogen, from food and feed supplies, and preventing severe economic losses;** (2000) Authors, Outstanding Paper of the Year, SRRC; (1999-2001) Outstanding Performance Awards; (2002) Elected Fellow of the Society of Industrial Microbiology; (2002) Outstanding Senior Scientist, ARS.

Duke, Steve: (1999) Education Award, Mississippi Weed Science Society; (2000) Outstanding Senior Scientist Award, USDA, ARS; (2001) Elected Member of the Henderson State University Academy; (2001) Awarded the Researcher/Scholar of the Year Award by the University of Mississippi (One person from each Department or equivalent entity is given this award); (2002) Elected Extraordinary Professor in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences of the University of Pretoria, South Africa; (2002) Awarded Molisch Award by the International Allelopathy Society (this is the highest award of this society, awarded once every three years).

Edmund, Tony: (2002) Cash Award for planning, coordinating and implementing AEP training.

Keeling Rita: (2000) Cash Award for outstanding effort as Outreach Coordinator for the Mid South Area; (2001) Cash Award for providing outstanding leadership and management of the Area's Human Resources and Outreach Programs; (2002) Cash Award for outstanding performance in managing the Human Resources and outreach activities in the Mid South Area. Non-government: Certificate of Appreciation from the Marketing Management Technology Department of Leland High School, Leland, MS for serving as a Craft Committee Member.

McAlpine, Jimmy: (2000) Awarded a capacity building grant for work with African-American Students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the Southeast United States; (2001, 2002) Merit awards; (2002) Recognized by Alabama A& M University for contributions to career development programs for underrepresented minorities.

McCain, Gay V.: (2002) Certificate of Merit for superior performance as Supervisory Entomologist; (2001) Certificate of Merit for superior performance as Supervisory Entomologist; (2001) New Leader Program Graduate, Leadership Development Academy, USDA, Graduate School.

Smith, Barbara J.: (2002) Current President of the Southern Division of American Phytopathological Society.

Villa, Jose: (1999) ARS Certificate of Merit for collection of queen bees in Russia; (2001) ARS Certificate of Merit for service in planning and constructing new building; (2002) Federal Laboratory Consortium for Technology Transfer, Group award to Honey-Bee Breeding Research Unit, for providing honey bees resistant to parasitic mites.

Winston Patricia J.: (2000) **USDA Secretary's Group Honor Award for Excellence. Y2K Millennium Rollover Team;** (2000) USDA Certificate of Merit for significant contributions to the ARS Year 2000 conversion effort. (2000) USDA-ARS-SRRC: Special Director's Service Award; (2001) SRRC's Employee of the Year Award; (1999) Appreciation Award from MSA Administrative Council for organizing the first council meeting held at SRRC.

Wright Maureen: (2002) Recognized for editorial work on the Formosan Termite News Letter.

All honor awards nominations must clearly describe the significance of the contribution being recognized, any goals achieved, how the quality of performance substantially exceeds normal job expectations, and indicate any measurable or non-measurable benefits.

The diversity of the American population has been its greatest asset and probably its most underutilized asset. With rapidly changing U.S. demographics and the globalization of trade within the last decade, it has been well recognized that those organizations astute enough to embrace diversity in their workforce, at all levels, will improve employee morale and productivity, and generate innovation through a wider range of solutions. Workforce diversity goes beyond satisfying legal requirements of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

Realizing the urgent need to diversify the workforce in USDA/ARS, the Mid South Area (MSA) Director, Dr. Edgar King, established a MSA Workforce Diversity Committee (MSAWDC) in 1998 to develop the MSA workforce to reflect the changing face of America. Dr. King put together a team of MSA employees to serve on the committee based on: (1) the employees' strong commitment to this issue (because the task was uphill and challenging); (2) their ability to take on this added responsibility (because these were not full-time positions); and (3) representation from each location within MSA, grade-levels, and ethnic backgrounds (because many different view-points needed to be represented). The mandate of Dr. King to the committee was simple **“Diversification of the MSA workforce is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do!”** The committee followed the principle that development of the most innovative, productive and efficient workforce required incorporation of a philosophy among its fellow employees of fostering a culture that is built on trust, respect, teamwork, communication, empowerment and commitment, in an environment free of discrimination. The committee, in the short period of three years, has made remarkable strides in achieving its goals. It has used the human hand in its logo as its guiding principle of “strength through diversity,” realizing that the hand derives its strength from the diversity of the fingers, which would not be so if fingers were all thumbs. This message has resonated throughout the MSA workforce because of its simplicity. **The committee on its inception established three parallel paths of action, namely effective recruitment and outreach programs, retention through training and development, and a spirit of inclusion and assimilation to achieve and accept diversity in the MSA workplace.**

Recruitment. This aspect of the committee's task has included vigorous and targeted recruitment for current vacancies as well as building a diverse pool of potential candidates for future employment. **(1)** For filling immediate vacancies, Committee members have identified a select but effective list of sources for underrepresented minorities. To monitor accountability in hiring, the Area Administration has required every MSA selecting official to provide written evidence that he/she has made all reasonable efforts to assure that the Certificate of Eligibles issued to fill vacancies includes individuals from targeted/under-represented groups. In addition new employees are surveyed to identify the most effective recruitment opportunities. This aggressive approach has been copied by the ARS Director for Recruitment to fill vacancies at all ARS locations. The aggressive approach of MSAWDC and the strong commitment of the Area Administration has already resulted in notable changes in the MSA workforce. For example, between 2000-2001 there was only a 4% increase in the white male/female employment, but a 8% increase in African-American females, a 10% increase in Asian females and a 20% rise in the Hispanic female employee category. Although three Native-American employees left the MSA workforce, 3 were added in 2001, demonstrating the establishment of a conduit for a diverse group of employees. More importantly, this change in diversity index was reflected at the higher grade levels (at GS-11 and above): e.g. a Native American female was competitively recruited at the Senior Executive Service level (Associate Area Director), several African-American females were hired at the scientist levels (GS-11 and higher), and Hispanics were promoted from within (on a competitive basis) to the scientist level from support staff level (GS-9), as well as to managerial levels. **Consequently, MSA leads ARS in minority and women employment at every grade level.**

(2) In building a future pool of employees, the MSA Administration took the lead in directing each MSA Research Leader to establish one or more student position within his/her unit as part of a targeted diversification program. Specific promotional material (bilingual) was prepared by committee members to highlight to students at both high school and undergraduate levels that ARS/MSA is the most “rewarding” place to work in agriculture related disciplines, where specific programs for diversity are sought and celebrated - not avoided. Involvement with minority teachers (0 in '98, 2 in '99, and 11 in '00) in agriculture related sciences, student and community activities such as participation in science fairs, career fairs, career counseling, mentoring students, recognizing scholarly achievement that advance an appreciation for agriculture and agricultural research have been established. These activities have been recognized through a number of liaisons and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with historically African-American 1890 Universities. Federal grants have been received to provide financial support for minority student employment programs (e.g. \$100,000 with University of New Orleans and Southern University of New Orleans; \$50,000 with Xavier University of New Orleans). Under a MOU, ARS Administration has selected the MSAWDC to take the lead on training a diverse pool of students and faculty from Miami Dade Community College. In the July-August 2000 edition of USDA News, MSAWDC members were recognized for working with high school students to develop skills for the workplace. Alabama A&M University (an 1890 Institution) declared ARS/MSA a Gold Level Sponsor in employment programs because of the expanded use of Federal Student Career Enhancement Program (one student in 1997 to 18 in 2000 from this University) to train and employ minority graduate students for non-competitive hiring at the Scientist Level.

Retention. To retain our best and brightest, the committee has utilized creative ways for professional development of our workforce through the use of the Individual Development Plan and effective use of monetary and non-monetary awards. Employees have been made very aware of potential for upward mobility and achievement of career goals. These programs, just in the last year have resulted in several promotions and reassignments of quality employees to desirable and suitable positions; thus enhancing employee morale and productivity. For example, a Hispanic female Secretary (GS-5) was promoted (competitively) to a GS-7 Program Analyst position, upon completing her B.S. degree. Another female technical employee was promoted (through desk audit) to GS-11, from GS-9, upon completing her M.S. degree. Two other African-American female employees were moved into Administrative (Supervisory) positions (with promotions) after completing one year details at various MSA locations.

Assimilation. To successfully utilize and assimilate a diverse workforce, some common sense practices must also receive regular and deliberate attention; with actions such as welcoming, valuing and respecting. The MSAWDC has promoted the establishment of “Human Relations Committees” at all MSA locations to celebrate special observance events such as Hispanic, Asian-Pacific, Native American, and African American Heritage Months. This program has been very effective in employees accepting their differences and recognizing their similarities. For example, at the New Orleans location, the special observances are celebrated with a cultural awareness program, often coupled with an ethnic meal, to help employees understand and appreciate cultural differences. In addition at our annual Cultural Diversity Day, **ALL** “diversity” is celebrated. For this innovative approach to assimilation of a diverse workforce, SRRC was selected amongst all Federal agencies in the area for the New Orleans Federal Executive Board’s EEO award.

In spite of these demonstrated successes, the MSAWDC realizes that **establishing diversity in the workforce is a PROCESS and not a PROJECT**. For a permanent open mindedness to alternate points of view, the committee is constantly finding innovative ways to change the culture within the MSA workforce by learning from others, such as the Office of Personnel Management and some major U.S. Corporations. Although serving on the WDC has significantly increased the workload of its members nominated for this award, all have used creative thinking and shown exceptional dedication to the task, spending many hours of their personal time, money and efforts to make sure that they are doing the **“right thing”**.

PART F. CONTACT INFORMATION

NOMINATOR	NAME KORONA PRINCE		E-MAIL ADDRESS kprince@ars.usda.gov
	ADDRESS USDA/ARS Civil Rights Staff, Room 3552, S. Bldg., Washington, DC 20250		
	DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO. 202-690-2244	EVENING TELEPHONE NO.	FAX NO. 202-690-0088
NAME OF INDIVIDUAL NOMINEE, OR GROUP LEADER	NAME EDGAR G. KING, JR.		E-MAIL ADDRESS eking@ars.usda.gov
	ADDRESS USDA/ARS/MSA, JWDSRC, 141 Experiment Station Road, Stoneville, MS 38776		
	DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO. 662-686-5266	EVENING TELEPHONE NO. 662-390-3378	FAX NO. 662-686-5459
SURVIVOR INFORMATION (POST HUMOUS AWARD)	NAME		E-MAIL ADDRESS
	ADDRESS		
	DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO.	EVENING TELEPHONE NO.	FAX NO.

PART G. APPROVAL PROCESS (Review/Clearances)

Submit nominations through Agency Heads and the appropriate Under/Assistant Secretary. Agencies without an Under/Assistant Secretary must submit nominations directly to the Director, Office of Human Resources Management.

Agency Heads must ensure the validity of all accomplishments. Screen all nominations for equal employment opportunity violations and disciplinary actions. Once selected, Honor Award recipients will be screened at the Departmental level. This precautionary measure is necessary to avoid any possible situations that may cause embarrassment to the Secretary and USDA.

For all nominations, complete items 1 thru 3 below.

1. SIGNATURE OF RECOMMENDING OFFICIAL	TITLE	DATE
2. SIGNATURE OF AGENCY HEAD	TITLE	DATE
3. SIGNATURE OF UNDER/ASSISTANT SECRETARY	TITLE	DATE

Group nominations with individuals other than the agency submitting the nomination should have concurring signatures from the participating employees' Under/Assistant Secretary.

1. SIGNATURE OF UNDER/ASSISTANT SECRETARY	TITLE	DATE
2. SIGNATURE OF UNDER/ASSISTANT SECRETARY	TITLE	DATE