Attachment 5 - UAA Alumni of the Year Awards for 2016 Honoring Outstanding Alumni for Post-USAID Service. Statement of **Frank Almaguer**, Chairman of the UAA Board Awards Committee

This is the portion of the AGM program that honors colleagues for significant contributions since their retirement. This is our third annual awards presentation. As in previous years, the UAA Awards Committee had a difficult time selecting winners from among truly inspirational work undertaken by many of our fellow alumni. All nominations received reflected the purpose of this award, which is to recognize creative service in some aspect of development work overseas or at home. That service may have evolved from the experience and skills acquired at USAID, but it also reflects new paths taken in support of the broad objectives that brought us into the development profession many years ago. This year, our award recipients have focused on empowering local communities to use the resources around them to achieve higher-level economic and social goals.

**Paul and Kathleen Vitale**

**Paul and Kathleen Vitale** are this year’s winners of the **UAA Alumni of the Year award in the international category.** This is the first time we have made an award to a couple.

Paul and Kathleen Vitale’s international development work began in 1963 with the Peace Corps. Paul’s degree in city planning led to work in community development in Ecuador and self-help housing in Peru. A 25-year USAID career followed for Paul, focusing on urban and community development in Latin America. Meanwhile, Kathleen, with a background in art history, taught and worked with local artisans. She subsequently turned to writing and photography, and becoming a prize-winning journalist.

While not directly employed by USAID, she has exemplified the supportive role of spouses, mostly unpaid, but whose work in the development community is insufficiently recognized. Hence, by honoring Kathleen in this joint award we are also recognizing the work of USAID spouses overseas.

In 1991, Paul retired from USAID and moved to the West Coast to teach and lecture. In 2001, Paul and Kathleen inherited a collection of hand-woven textiles from Kathleen’s mother. This led them into a new field of endeavor. They began to travel to some of the most remote corners of Guatemala to identify and record the disappearing skills and products of traditional Mayan weavers. Violence in rural Guatemala, cultural changes in those communities and cheap commercial imitations were threatening the disappearance of traditional hand-woven designs and skills.

They formed an NGO, “Endangered Threads Documentaries,” to record and promote the traditional weaving techniques of the Mayan communities. Paul and Kathleen’s work has not only been recognized by the American Association of Anthropology and shown in multiple museums, but also it has had an economic impact by providing the weavers with advice on quality, consistency and cleanliness of their products. With the help of Peace Corps volunteers, they have encouraged the formation of weaving groups to improve sales and to learn from one another.

The Vitales have often returned to the weavers’ remote villages and have developed a personal relationship with many of them, encouraging the weavers to educate their children and to pass on their artisan skills to younger generations. Their work has utilized the professional skills that they developed over a lifetime to benefit indigenous populations whose contributions to world culture might otherwise have been lost. You can learn more about their project at next Monday’s UAA Development Dialogue Series at DACOR and in the November UAA Newsletter.

Paul and Kathleen: as a token of our admiration, the UAA is pleased to present to you this World Time Table Clock with your names inscribed in recognition of being named **UAA Alumni of the Year, 2016, in the international category.**

**David Garms**

**Dave Garms** is this year’s winner of the **UAA Alumni of the Year award in the domestic category.** Dave’s career with USAID started in 1968 in Vietnam as a rural development officer and continued through multiple domestic and overseas assignments in Asia and Africa, culminating in his appointment in the 1990s to serve as USAID Representative at the FAO in Rome. After retiring from USAID, Dave purchased a run-down farm in the Shenandoah Valley. He opted to use his previous farming experience in Minnesota and his program development and implementation skills acquired at USAID to promote and teach his neighbors new land, soil and water conservation practices.

He prepared ultimately successful proposals to the USDA regional office, to his local soil and water conservation district, and to the Potomac Conservancy NGO. His proposal to the Potomac Conservancy led to a permanent easement for the farm. USDA funded his proposal to protect 15 acres of wetlands and a stream. The local soil and water conservation district funded a “Better Management Practice” project to plant four acres of hardwood trees in areas subject to high erosion. And under a USDA Grassland Reserve Program, 10 acres of native grasses were planted.

Dave was the first farmer in the county to implement all these projects. As a result, the farm has become a training site for farmers interested in land conservation and the local soils authorities have recognized Dave for his commitment to training local farmers. Dave was also recognized by the Virginia Department of Forestry for forestry management practices carried out on the farm. Further, Dave served on a Department of Interior steering committee to develop a strategy on how to protect nearby Civil War battlefields. As a result, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation is implementing the program he helped to develop. He now gives tours of the Fisher’s Hill battlefield, which includes the western side of his farm. An application for historic recognition of the farm has been submitted to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

As if this were not enough, Dave has continued to serve others in equally meaningful ways.

Through the Fairfax County Department of Volunteer Resources, he has been involved in teaching history and geography over several years to an autistic young man. He takes severely handicapped individuals to medical appointments, grocery shopping and to other places where they need to go. This activity involves much more than transportation. He has become their counselor, sharing advice and information that they may need on government and other services available to them.

Finally, Dave participates in the UAA mentor/mentee program with USAID.

Dave: as a token of our admiration, the UAA is pleased to present to you this World Time Table Clock with your name inscribed in recognition of being named **UAA Alumnus of the Year, 2016, in the domestic category.**

**Concluding Remarks**

While it is true that we have remarkable representatives of the USAID alumni community in these winners, many others are equally deserving of high praise. Over the coming months, we will feature the inspiring work of some of the other nominees in the Alumni Profiles section of the monthly UAA Newsletter. Please start considering whom you would like to nominate for the 2017 awards. While the formal request for nominations will not begin for several months, there are some wonderful stories that need to be shared more broadly. The work of our alumni colleagues reflects the commitment to serving others that led us to USAID earlier in our careers and their work continues to inspire us all.