**Afro-American Alumni Awards**

**Attorney Alfred J. Gomes Community Service Award**

The **Community Service Award** is named for Alfred J. Gomes (1897-1974) of Cape Verde. Attorney Gomes came to New Bedford at the age of seven and was educated in the New Bedford Public Schools. He worked to finance his own college education and graduated from Boston University Law School in 1923. Having attained this level of education, he became one of the first Cape Verdean-born Americans to receive a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree. Returning to New Bedford after graduation, Attorney Gomes became one of the city’s most prominent civic and community leaders. He was especially concerned with promoting the aspirations and betterment of Cape Verdean’s in this country and in Cape Verde.

Attorney Gomes’ accomplishments are vast and substantial. Some of his most significant activities and contributions include: founding the Nantucket Lightship Memorial Scholarship Fund/The Seaman’s Memorial Scholarship Fund, which assisted many Cape Verdean-Americans in achieving academic prominence; helping to establish the Verdean Veterans Achievements Awards; and organizing the first Cape Verdean Boy Scout troop at the Cape Verdean Benefit Association.

Attorney Alfred J. Gomes was an extremely successful fundraiser and philanthropist. In 1942, he organized a Cape Verdean Relief Fund and succeeded in raising funds for food and clothing for the needy. In addition to fundraising and financial support, he organized and donated much time to promoting Cape Verdean models, instrumentalists, dancers and vocalists, by presenting them in exhibits and festivals. He was considered one of the prolific historians and researchers of Cape Verdean history and culture. In 1994, Attorney Gomes was inducted into the Massachusetts Hall of Black Achievement at Bridgewater State University (<http://vc.bridgew.edu/hoba/index.html>).

Created in 2016, the Attorney Alfred J. Gomes Community Service Award is given to a member of the Afro-American Alumni who exemplifies the ideal of “men and women for and with others.” This alumnus shows genuine dedication to the ideals of social justice, authentic relationships with the greater community, and empowers peers to serve and/or increase awareness of injustice.

**Selection Criteria:**

1. The nominee must hold a degree from Bridgewater State University, whether it is an undergraduate degree, a graduate degree or an honorary degree and a member of the Afro-American Alumni Association.
2. The nominee must evidence regular and sustained service to the community/society.
3. The nominee must serve on a volunteer basis or through professional involvement.
4. The nominee must use their talents to serve their community
5. The nominee personally undertakes at least one of the following:
	1. Service on a community board or lead a community project; or
	2. Advances the college through their service.
6. The nominee(s) must be present to accept the award at the Annual Awards Dinner in March.

**Selection Process:**

1. The nominee must be nominated by a member of the Afro-American Alumni Association. Current voting members of the Board of Directors of the Alumni Association are not eligible for this award.
2. The consideration and processing of the nomination shall take place once a year.
3. Nominees will be reviewed by the Awards Committee then narrowed to two candidates for a vote by the Executive Board & Alumni Council. Nominee must receive a majority vote to be selected.
4. Nominees who are not selected may be re-nominated.