

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **MenAlive's Vaughn receives Rich Cook Community Bridge Award**

**IRVINE, CA** — James Vaughn, President of the Board of MenAlive, the Orange County Gay Men's Chorus, has been named the 2015 recipient of the Rich Cook Community Bridge Award.

The award, named after the group's founder and former Artistic Director, is presented to community leaders who have built cultural and societal bridges between the LGBT community and the general public.

Vaughn was honored for his leadership during the crucial period following Cook's retirement. Since taking over, Vaughn has spent countless hours ensuring a smooth transition, and has led the chorus from operating at a deficit to a break-even point. He has worked tirelessly to professionalize the organizational structure to ensure MenAlive will continue its role as a premier musical entity and cultural ambassador for the LGBT community well into the future.

After earning a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Harvard, James worked for AOL where he created online tools that helped AOL be named one of the "25 Companies Changing the World of Internet and Politics."

Long active on the political scene on the local, state and national levels, Vaughn has helped pave the way for openly gay candidates to serve in many facets of government. He says, “I have always believed that serving openly and with integrity in whatever I do is the best path to full equality. This is especially true in what some might believe to be hostile environments.”

He has lobbied for LGBT issues before the California, Washington and Oregon state legislatures, focusing on educating GOP politicians who ignored or undervalued the LGBT community. In fact, he successfully lobbied then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to appoint 12 openly gay and lesbian appointees to state boards and commissions. Vaughn and his husband were the first gay couple in California to serve as gubernatorial appointees in an administration.

He serves as a Congressional consultant, conducting research on how to better open channels of communication between citizens and their congressional representatives.

An openly gay staff member during Richard Riordan’s campaign for mayor of Los Angeles, he later served in Riordan’s administration where he lobbied for the appointment of qualified LGBT people to positions of authority. In 1993, he persuaded Riordan to become the first LA mayor to participate in a Pride Parade.

*A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, MenAlive’s mission: “Through music, men’s voices unite to entertain, inform, bring healing, joy, friendship and build bridges to the public at large.” Since its founding in 2001, the group has grown from about 30 members to be one of Orange County’s largest and most respected choruses, and is an integral part of the southern California arts scene.*