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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA New York City Transit Recognizes Bus Operators for Exemplary Service with New Award

Piloting a 13-ton, 40 foot vehicle through New York City traffic for eight to ten hours a day while transporting a variety of personalities would not ordinarily be conducive to maintaining a pleasant demeanor, but during his career with New York City Transit retired bus operator Govan Brown was well known for maintaining a cheerful and engaging disposition that belied the daily grind of an extremely demanding job.

During his 21 years behind the wheel of a New York City Transit bus Brown received more than 1,400 customer commendations for his courtesy, professionalism and the sparkling conversations that brightened the days of hundreds of bus riders. The unflappable bus operator was Ralph Kramden's polar opposite, even being featured in an April 1988 New York Times article detailing the good will he spread as he ferried Manhattan bus customers north and south on the M101. He was also highlighted in psychologist Daniel Goleman's book, "Emotional Intelligence," where he was described as "a 'natural,' the kind of person who always seems to know just what to do and what to say in any predicament."

The first annual Govan Brown Presidential Award was presented to four bus operators who performed their jobs in the finest tradition of Brown, who retired in 1989. The awards were presented during a noon ceremony at New York City Transit headquarters on October 28th, attended by New York City Transit President Howard H. Roberts, Jr., MTA Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer Elliot G. Sander, MTA Board Member & NYC Transit Committee Chairwoman Doreen Frasca, Joseph Smith, President of MTA Bus & Senior Vice President of New York City Transit's Department of Buses and TWU Local 100 President Roger Toussaint. Govan Brown and his family were special guests during the ceremony.

"Our hard working front-line employees deserve greater recognition than they often receive," said Sander, "This award, aptly named for Govan Brown, will draw attention each year to some of New York City Transit's finest good-will ambassadors. My heart-felt congratulations go out to all four of this year's well-deserving winners."

When it came time to create an award that exemplified the best attributes of a New York City Transit Bus Operator, Transit President Roberts, who served as the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Surface Transit during his first tenure, remembered Brown as one of Transit's most effective good-will ambassadors. "During his career Govan Brown was the ideal of what a bus operator should be – safe, courteous and having that special ability that lets his customers know that they are in good hands," Roberts explained. "Operating a bus in this environment is a demanding job requiring more than just excellent driving skills. Outstanding people skills are also part of the equation."

Honored were: Vincent Mashburn of the Michael J. Quill Depot for earning the most customer commendations of any MaBSTOA bus operator through 2007 with a tally of 139. David Abramski, also of Quill, was honored for garnering the most customer commendations in 2007 for MaBSTOA, pulling down 21. Queens Village Bus Operator Roberto Stuart received the award for being the most commended Transit Authority bus operator through 2007 by earning 101 commendations. Jeffrick Dean, assigned to the East New York Depot, earned a plaque for being the Transit Authority bus operator receiving the highest number of customer commendations in 2007 with 16 commendations.

As impressive as these achievements are, however, Brown carried away an award naming him the recipient of the Most Customer Commendations in the History of New York City Transit. Now that's a record we're all trying to break.



Medal recipients, standing, from left to right: Vincent Mashburn, David Abramski, Roberto Stuart and Jeffrick Dean. Seated in front: Govan Brown