

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Jefferson Awards and the American Institute for Public Service were founded in 1973 to honor the highest ideals and achievements in the field of public service in the United States. Through the Jefferson Awards the Institute recognizes the dedication, sacrifice and accomplishments of individuals serving the American people and strives to attract new, young leadership into public service.

Historically, public service in America has been held in very low regard. The assumption has always been that the most talented people in the country operate in the private sector and that the public sector is a haven and a refuge for mediocrity. In an attempt to dramatize excellence in public service, the goal of the American Institute is to establish what will become a series of national awards for public service similar to the Nobel or Pulitzer prizes.

The Board of Selectors, co-chaired by Jacques Kennedy Onassis and Senator Robert Taft, selects the Jefferson Award winners, and awards are granted in five different categories:

- The Greatest Public Service Performed By An Elected or Appointed Official
- The Greatest Public Service Performed By A Private Citizen
- The Greatest Public Service Benefiting The Disadvantaged
- The Greatest Public Service Performed By An Individual Thirty-Five Years or Under
- The Greatest Public Service Performed By Private Individuals Benefiting Local Communities

