



VASA ORDEN AV AMERIKA
DISTRIKTSLOGEN NORRA SVERIGE NR 19
DISTRIKTSLOGEN SÖDRA SVERIGE NR 20
En svensk-amerikansk vänskaps- och kulturorganisation

The Swedish American of the Year Committee 2018

Press release
Årets Svensk-Amerikan 2018

Bruce Karstadt was born in 1951 in Lindsborg Kansas, a town founded by Swedish immigrants in 1869 to which his great-grandparents immigrated in the late 1800s. He earned a Bachelor of Arts, *magna cum laude*, in history and political science from Bethany College, and was the fourth generation of his family to graduate from this institution. He later joined Bethany's administrative staff, taking on roles including Legal Counsel and Executive Assistant to the President. Karstadt received a Juris Doctor degree from the Washburn University School of Law.

While serving on Bethany's administrative staff, he became involved in supporting the organizing committee for the New Sweden '88 bi-national celebration, which led to his interest in pursuing a career that would contribute to strengthening relationships between Sweden and America.

In 1990 Karstadt was named the President-CEO of the American Swedish Institute (ASI) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, an organization founded in 1929 by Swedish newspaper publisher, Swan J. Turnblad. He was first appointed as Honorary Consul of Sweden in 1995, and since 2003 he has served as Honorary Consul General of Sweden for Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska.

One of Karstadt's major accomplishments as head of ASI is to have overseen the design and construction of the ASI's acclaimed 2012 contemporary addition to the iconic 1908 original Turnblad mansion. The new structure, known as the Nelson Cultural Center, is a LEED Gold-certified sustainable building which connects to, honors and draws attention to the historic mansion, while also providing expanded public gathering spaces, educational classrooms and facilities for material collections and archives.

Since its expansion, the American Swedish Institute continues to grow dynamically in serving its community as a gathering place for all people. In 2016-17, ASI welcomed over 150,000 people through its doors. It is renowned for its award-winning café, FIKA, and has emerged as a "right-sized" vibrant museum and cultural center presenting the work of internationally recognized artists through its own efforts and often in collaboration with many leading institutions in Minnesota, Sweden and the Nordic region.

It focuses a considerable amount of effort in community service, especially in engaging new arrival families from Somalia, Mexico, Laos and other countries whose migration stories mirror those of 19th and early 20th century immigrants from the Nordic region.

Karstadt serves on many boards and civic committees, including the Friends of House of Sweden in Washington DC, and the American Friends of Uppsala University. He also



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presently serves on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota chapter of the Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce, Swedish Council of America, the Association of Midwest Museums and the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center.

In 2014, he received the Royal Order of the Polar Star, Commander Class, from HM King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden. In 2013 he received a Medal of Honor from the City of Uppsala, Sweden, the first given to a non-resident of the city, in recognition of his work building international partnerships and understanding between the sister cities of Minneapolis and Uppsala. The Swedish-American Historical Society presented him with its Carl Sandburg Medal in 2012.

The Vasa Order of America is very proud to appoint Bruce Karstadt as the Swedish-American of the Year 2018. He has done an excellent work to bring the American Swedish Institute into a successful cultural institution.

The celebration of Bruce Karstadt will take place in Växjö, August 10th- 12th.

The Swedish District Lodges of the Vasa Order of America(*) has every year since 1960 chosen a Swedish American of the Year to commemorate the Swedish emigration to North America.

The purpose is to set focus on Sweden America and the Swedish Americans, either they are related to early emigrants from Sweden or emigrants from late decades. Partly the award is meant to be a recognition of exceptional work by an individual in his or her profession and/or valuable work for promoting good relations between Sweden and the US or Canada, partly it is meant to highlight Sweden America. 58 persons have received the honor and they represent a wide range of competences and talents, women as well as men.

In the past years' recipients of the Swedish American of the Year Award are 2008 Barbro Osher, Consul General, 2009 Anne-Charlotte Hanes Harvey, Drama Professor, 2010 John E. Norton, Historian, 2011 Kerstin Lane, Director Swedish Museum Center, Chicago, 2012 Ingvar Wikstrom, Entrepreneur of Swedish Food Culture, 2013 Martina Arfwidson CEO Face Stockholm, 2014 C. Fred Bergsten, Economist, 2015 Emily Tepe, Artist, 2016 Nils Lofgren, Musician, 2017 Jan Eliasson, Diplomat.

(*) Vasa Order of America is a non-profit organization started by Swedish Emigrants' in the USA in 1896. Since 1924 there is a Swedish branch of the Vasa Order of America.

Vasa Order of America – SAY committee 2018
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