Darden Restaurants Receives Two Distinguished Community Service Awards from Asian-American Heritage Council

ORLANDO, FL – During the Asian-American Heritage Council’s (AAHC) Asian Gala 2001 held in Orlando, FL, on May 12, Darden Restaurants, the world’s largest casual dining restaurant company, was recognized with two distinguished Community Service Awards for its support of diversity in the workplace and the community.

The Council presented Darden with the Corporate Community Service Award in recognition of its commitment to making diversity a priority, a business strategy and a way of life. For example, Darden currently has five cultural/ethnic employee “networks” at its Restaurant Support Center in Orlando. The company supports African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American and Women and Family Networks. Darden also supports more than 250 local and national minority organizations including ethnic chambers of commerce and other community groups like National Council of La Raza, NAACP, Urban League, National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), and the United Negro College Fund.

The Council also presented an individual Community Service Award to Linda Landman-Gonzalez, Darden’s Manager of Diversity Relations, for her work with organizations like the NCCJ, the Adult Literacy League and the Hispanic Business Initiative Fund.

Earlier this year, the company was also honored as the 2000 Corporation of the Year by the Greater Los Angeles African American Chamber of Commerce and the Mexican American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois (MACC), and for two years in a row Darden has been selected to Fortune magazine’s list of “America’s 50 Best Companies for Minorities.”

Darden Restaurants, with headquarters in Orlando, Florida, is the world’s largest casual dining company, with 1,139 restaurants operating under the Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Bahama Breeze and Smokey Bones brands, over 119,000 employees and annual sales of over $3.7 billion.