Philip Hart, who served as Michigan Senator from 1959 to 1976, championed consumer and civil rights reforms with such integrity that he was considered by colleagues in both parties to be “the conscience of the Senate.” He was so revered by his colleagues that the Senate named its newest office building after him in 1982. Public Affairs Quarterly wrote of Senator Hart that he combined “a strong moral character, a larger vision of the social good, and a dedication to open and rational discourse.” As Chairman of the influential Antitrust Committee, Senator Hart organized hearings on a wide variety of consumer protection issues – from auto repair fraud to media concentration to libertarian ownership of pharmacies. His signature legislation was the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, which required much greater standardization of size and terminology on products. Senator Hart was a champion of policies that were years ahead of his time. He pushed forward antitrust legislation and fought tirelessly against price fixing schemes, discrimination, deceptive advertising and confusing price deals. In recognition of his role as one of Congress’s champions of both democratic discourse and the rights of consumers, CFA named its Public Service Award after Senator Hart to be presented to public servants who have meaningfully improved the lives of American families and served their country with unwavering integrity.

ESTHER PETERSON CONSUMER SERVICE AWARD

Esther Peterson, also known as the “grand dame of the consumer movement,” is best known for her consumer and women’s advocacy under three presidents. Following her work as AFL-CIO’s first woman lobbyist from 1958 to 1961, she was appointed as director of the Women’s Bureau of the Department of Labor, and later as an assistant Secretary of Labor under President Kennedy, becoming the highest ranking woman in the Kennedy Administration. Subsequently, as special assistant for consumer affairs to Presidents Johnson and Carter, she effectively championed consumer reforms in Congress and the Executive Branch. Among her many accomplishments was persuading the superstore industry to adopt unit pricing and open dating voluntarily, improving consumer health and safety in developing countries, expanding the use of warning labels, improving pesticide safety, and meat inspection, cracking down on misleading advertising, and promoting truth in labeling. She was the first chair and executive director of the New York State Consumer Protection Board and served as executive director of the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs. In recognition of her inspiring example of the importance of consumer advocacy in journalism, CFA named its Media Service Award after her. This award is presented to individuals who continue Ms. Furness’ legacy of consumer-focused journalism aimed at improving the lives of all Americans.

PHILIP HART PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

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Welcome to Consumer Federation of America’s 49th Annual Awards Dinner, recognizing individuals who have made significant contributions to the welfare of the nation’s consumers.

Jack Gillis ................................. Welcome
Executive Director
Consumer Federation of America

Marceline White ........................................ Introductions
Executive Director, Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Presented by
United States House of Representatives
THE HONORABLE FRANK PALLONE

Congressman Pallone began his political career in his home city of Long Branch, New Jersey, getting elected to the City Council in 1982. He was re-elected in 1991 and 1997. In 1998, Pallone was elected to the United States House of Representatives, representing the Monmouth County coastal areas of New Jersey.

American Banker. Beverly Brown Ruggia is President of the Consumer Federation of America, People’s Action, and Americans for Financial Reform. She has represented New Jersey’s 3rd and 6th Districts in the U.S. House of Representatives, and has been honored for her distinguished career advancing the cause of auto and highway safety. Pallone distinguished himself as an advocate for the environment, senior citizen concerns, and providing constituent services. Since 1998, Congressman Pallone has represented New Jersey’s 3rd Congressional District in the 111th Congress and the 112th Congress, and in January 2019 was sworn in for his 11th Congressional term. He is currently Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee where he previously served as ranking member. During the 111th Congress, Pallone championed a number of important public health issues, including health care, energy, environmental protection, food and drug safety, consumer protection, and the protection of Medicare and Medicaid programs. Pallone has championed improving the nation’s food safety, strengthening clean air and water laws, making health care affordable, and supporting the Affordable Care Act. He worked closely to pass legislation to strengthen the Medicare and Medicaid programs, fighting to ensure all Americans have access to safe drinking water and clean air, protecting the free and open internet, strengthening the federal Superfund program to clean up toxic waste sites, and protecting American shores against the threat of offshore drilling. CFA is pleased to present the Philip Hart Public Service Award to Congressman Pallone in recognition of his vast contributions to advancing pro-consumer legislation on a wide array of important issues.

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Presented by
United States House of Representatives

Jackie Gillan
Presented by
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Jackie Gillan ................................. Esther Peterson Consumer Service Award Winner
President Emeritus
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

Jackie Gillan is the President Emeritus of the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, a coalition formed in 1989 comprised of leading consumer, health and safety groups, and consumer advocacy organizations. Jackie Gillan has represented New Jersey’s 3rd and 6th Districts in the U.S. House of Representatives, and has been honored for her distinguished career advancing the cause of auto and highway safety. Pallone distinguished himself as an advocate for the environment, senior citizen concerns, and providing constituent services. Since 1998, Congressman Pallone has represented New Jersey’s 3rd Congressional District in the 111th Congress and the 112th Congress, and in January 2019 was sworn in for his 11th Congressional term. He is currently Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee where he previously served as ranking member. During the 111th Congress, Pallone championed a number of important public health issues, including health care, energy, environmental protection, food and drug safety, consumer protection, and the protection of Medicare and Medicaid programs. Pallone has championed improving the nation’s food safety, strengthening clean air and water laws, making health care affordable, and supporting the Affordable Care Act. He worked closely to pass legislation to strengthen the Medicare and Medicaid programs, fighting to ensure all Americans have access to safe drinking water and clean air, protecting the free and open internet, strengthening the federal Superfund program to clean up toxic waste sites, and protecting American shores against the threat of offshore drilling. CFA is pleased to present the Philip Hart Public Service Award to Congressman Pallone in recognition of his vast contributions to advancing pro-consumer legislation on a wide array of important issues.

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EIGHTH PETRSEN CONSUMER SERVICE AWARD

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Philip Hart Public Service Award

BEVERLY BROWN RUGGIA

Beverly Brown Ruggia is the Financial Justice Counsel for New Jersey Center for Fair Immigration Rights & Policymaking (NJ-FCIRP) where she advocates for the Community Reinvestment Act, fair housing, and access to financial services, including credit and savings, and mortgage financing. She advocates for strong consumer protection regulations and policies which seek to end unfair, deceptive, and abusive practices in banking, mortgage servicing, foreclosure, and all forms of lending and finance. Brown Ruggia led NJCA’s successful campaign to get a state pension to divest millions of dollars from the auto insurance industry’s systematic delay of claims. At ABC News, she investigated price-gouging in the air ambulance industry (nominated for a 2017 News & Documentary Emmy); mysterious fires in parked BMW vehicles; and mortgage fraud. Zimmermann received master’s and bachelor’s degrees from Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism. In recognition of her remarkable accomplishments and her commitment to the highest level of consumer journalism, CFA is pleased to present Stephanie Zimmermann with the Betty Furness Consumer Media Service Award.