



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
EXECUTIVE BRANCH ETHICS COMMISSION

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FRANKFORT, KY – At its meeting today the Executive Branch Ethics Commission presented to Edgar “Ed” Ross, Executive Director, Office of the Controller, Finance and Administration Cabinet, with its prestigious Livingston Taylor Ethics Award for the 2019-2021 biennium. The Commission established this biennial award program to recognize individuals, programs, or agencies within the executive branch of state government for their outstanding achievement and contributions in promoting the ethical conduct of executive branch employees.

Mr. Ross was nominated for the award by Cassidy Connell with support from the Finance and Administration Cabinet including testimony by Libby Carlin, current Executive Director of the Office of Policy and Audit.

Mr. Ross is a financial ethical compass that has provided direction to the employees across the Commonwealth. Mr. Ross has been instrumental in paving the ethical high road for financial integrity in the Executive Branch. Mr. Ross has made significant and positive contributions in the field of ethics demonstrated by his high level of financial integrity in his role overseeing the financial management of the Commonwealth. He has held the position of Controller since its inception in 1994. During his tenure, he has championed and established practices that allow the Commonwealth to be a leader in state financial management practices. Mr. Ross and his efforts has been nationally recognized by the National Association of State Comptrollers as the recipient of the Goldstein Leadership Award in 2018; by the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers, and Treasurers as its Distinguished Service Award recipient in 2019 and its President’s Award in 2010; and by the Government Finance Officers Association that awarded the Annual Commonwealth Financial Report thirty-three Certificates of Financial Achievement.

Mr. Ross has spearheaded promoting honesty and integrity in the Executive Branch by overseeing the creation and evolution of statewide practices to lead all state agencies toward providing accurate and reliable financial accounting and reporting, complying with procurement requirements, and establishing responsible financing and investing practices. His actions and personal reputation as a person of honesty and integrity have created public

confidence in the financial data used as the source for management and policy decisions by the establishment of regulations to implement internal controls “to both prevent and detect abuse, unintentional errors, and the fraudulent disbursement of funds or use of state assets.” 200 KAR 38:070, Section 2. He has also developed policies that guide executive branch agencies on the appropriate use of state funds to ensure “expenditures shall be reasonable in amount, beneficial to the public and not personal in nature.” See FAP 120-23-00.

During the biennium, Mr. Ross was integral in easing the Commonwealth through the pandemic. Mr. Ross’s advice and guidance was critical to ensuring the Commonwealth’s compliance with federal and state law while handling the expenses of pandemic spending exceeding \$67 billion.

Previous recipients of the award include: the Kentucky Department of Parks (2019); John Steffen, Executive Director of the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance (2017); Rep. Tanya Pullin, former sponsor of legislation related to ethics (2015); Robert D. Vance, former Secretary of the Public Protection Cabinet (2013); Crit Luallen, former Auditor of Public Accounts (2011); Jill LeMaster, retired Executive Director of the Executive Branch Ethics Commission (2009); and the Transportation Cabinet’s Office of Inspector General (2007).

The award is named in honor of Livingston Taylor, a former investigative reporter for the Courier–Journal, who wrote many articles on state government throughout his 26-year tenure, and who, upon his retirement, served as the Commission’s first chair from 1992 -1995. Mr. Taylor was responsible for the early direction of the Commission and donated a considerable amount of time and effort in leading the Commission. He set the tone for the Commission with his concern that the Commission be politically independent and show no favoritism. His dedication to promoting the ethical conduct of executive branch employees will long be remembered.