

2005

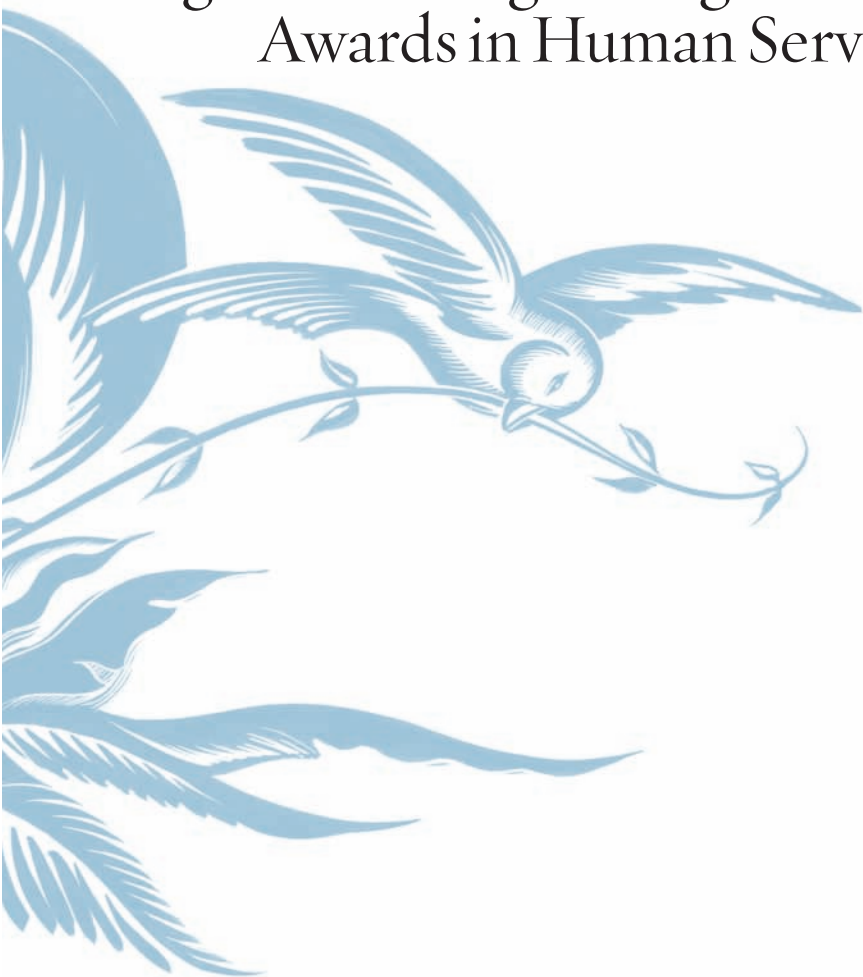
Virginia McKnight Binger
Awards in Human Service



THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

2005

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Said Salah Ahmed

Linda Brown

Wafiq Fannoun

Melvin Giles

Ora Hokes

Beth Holger

Curtis Levang

Larry and Noreen Luck

Hedwidge (Hedy) M.Tripp

Sister Jean Thuerauf



I'M ALWAYS MOVED when I read the nominations we receive for the Virginia McKnight Binger Awards in Human Service. This year was no different. Although we all lead hectic, complicated lives and we all share the same 24-hour day, how these 11 people choose to spend their time is remarkable. ♣ It's not uncommon for our awards committee to read nominations for people who regularly donate 15 hours each week to causes in which they believe, and which support communities across our state. It is difficult to measure what a difference those hours make, but in reading their stories one is convinced the time is multiplied in ways we can't even begin to see. ♣ From creating plays that teach culture and tolerance, to advocating for youth, volunteering for peace projects, connecting people to jobs, and mending guests' clothes at a homeless shelter, these individuals have found unique and important ways to make significant differences in the lives of others—therefore improving the quality of life for all. Their devotion, endurance, and commitment honor the legacy of my grandmother, Virginia, for whom these awards are named. ♣ On behalf of the Foundation and the awards committee, I extend my sincere gratitude to each of our awardees for their spirit of compassion and humble work to benefit others.

Erika L. Binger
Chair, The McKnight Foundation

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HE VIRGINIA MCKNIGHT BINGER

Awards in Human Service, an annual tradition at The McKnight Foundation, reflect the Foundation's deep belief in the virtue and power of compassion. Since 1985, the award has gone to 220 Minnesotans, including this year's group, who have selflessly given time and effort to help others with no expectation of material reward. Each recipient exemplifies the life-changing difference one person can make through service. This booklet announces the 2005 award recipients and describes their work.

♣ The Foundation created the Awards in Human Service in 1985.

The awards were renamed 10 years later as a tribute to Virginia McKnight Binger, who served the Foundation for nearly 50 years as a board member, as president from 1974 to 1987, and then as honorary chair until her death in 2002. Although her parents, William L. and Maude L. McKnight, established the Foundation, Mrs. Binger's personal compassion and generosity set the standard for the Foundation's work.

♣ Like Virginia McKnight Binger, those who receive these awards are acutely aware of others' needs. They are nominated in confidence by someone familiar with their work, and the nominations are researched and evaluated independently. To qualify, nominees must live in Minnesota and show commitment to helping others achieve a better life, while receiving little or nothing for their own efforts. Awardees each receive \$7,500.

♣ The Foundation invites nominations each spring. Beginning in August, a committee of volunteers who are active in various human service fields evaluates the nominations and recommends 10 nominees to the Foundation's board of directors. To receive a nomination form or for more information about the program, visit the Foundation's website at www.mcknight.org in May 2006.

Program

THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

710 South Second Street,
Minneapolis
2:30 p.m.
Friday, November 18, 2005

WELCOME

Peg Birk
INTERIM PRESIDENT, THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

Erika L. Binger
CHAIR, THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

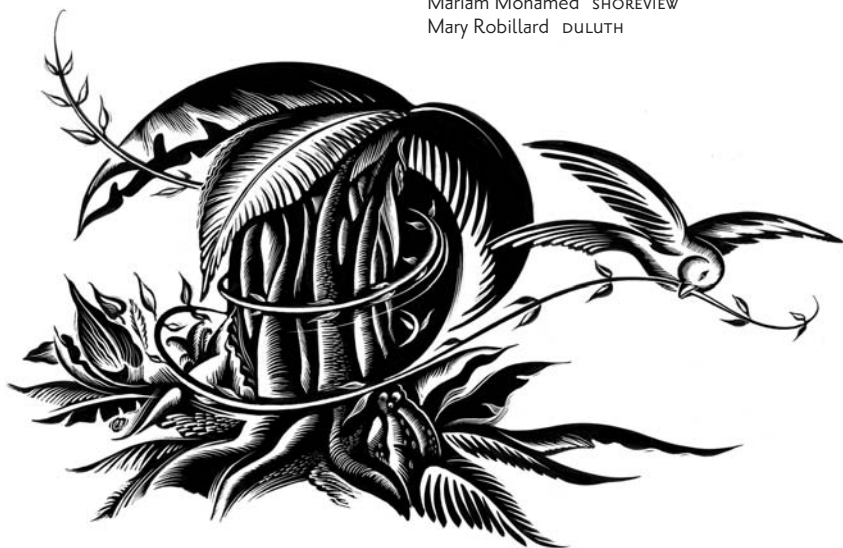
Ron Buzard
MEMBER, AWARDS COMMITTEE

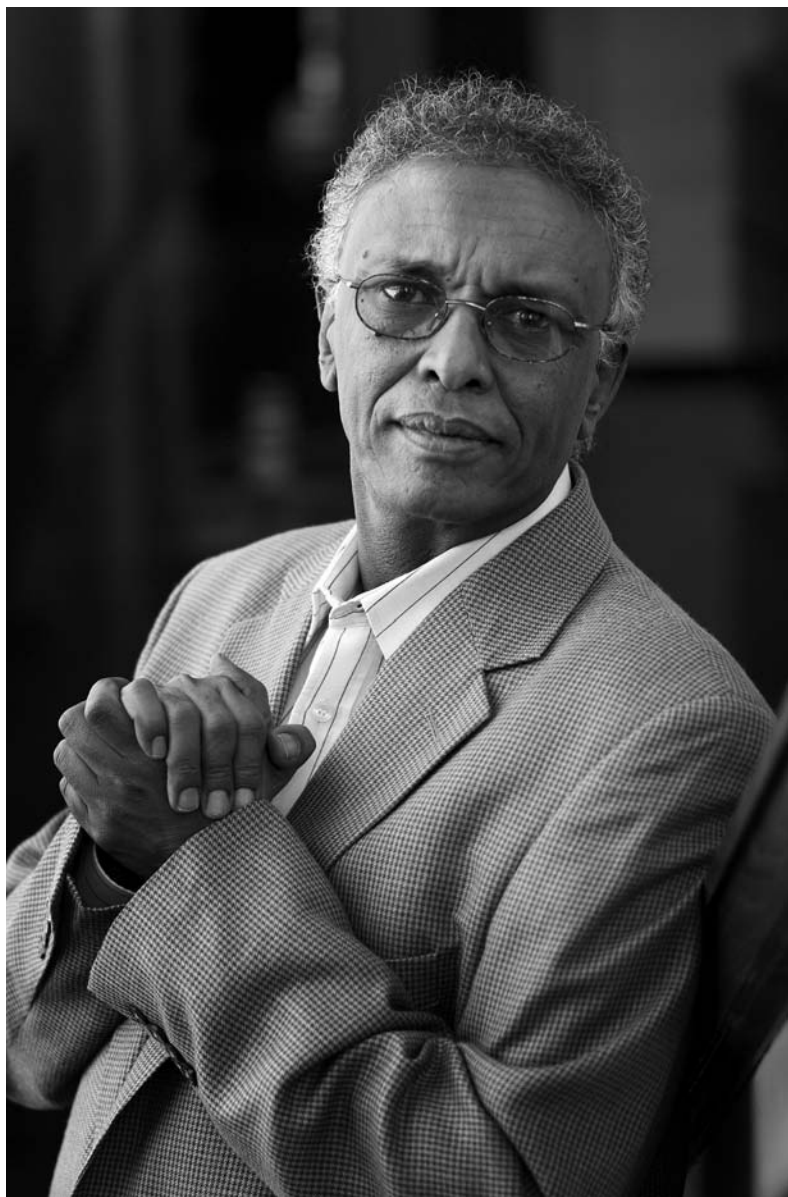
PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Erika L. Binger
Peg Birk

AWARDS IN HUMAN SERVICE COMMITTEE


Jeannine Balfour MINNEAPOLIS
Liliane Bilezikian MINNEAPOLIS
Ron Buzard ROCHESTER
Maria Liliana Espondaburu ST. PAUL
Mary Marshall MINNEAPOLIS
Mariam Mohamed SHOREVIEW
Mary Robillard DULUTH





Said Salah Ahmed

Said Salah Ahmed is a powerful voice within the Somali community, not only in Minnesota—the state with the largest Somali population in the United States—but also nationally and internationally. Said, a former refugee, has worked on humanitarian issues in the Somali community for 42 years. As a playwright, he continues to use a rich tradition of poetry, filmmaking, music, and theater to tell the Somali story and build hopes and dreams for the future of Somali people. ♣



“He is the bridge that keeps the Somali community in Minnesota connected and a cultural leader to the larger community that is now scattered across the world.”

—Mohamed M. Alabari

Described as both humble and highly influential, Said has contributed to the Somali community in countless ways. He was a catalyst for implementation of the native language literacy project in the Minneapolis Public Schools. He is the founder and president of the Somali Action Alliance, an advocacy organization that

has mobilized the Somali community around elections and educated them about critical issues like access to education, safety, positive activism, and community involvement. He appeals to the Somali people to work for peace, reconciliation, and an end to discrimination. ♣ Said is a teacher in the classroom and a teacher to the masses, and is deeply involved in the moral development of Somali society. He uses his gift for words and theater to speak to the hearts of the Somali people: “I use camel bells to bring together the Somali people who are dispersed throughout the world.”



Linda Brown

For more than a decade, Linda Brown has worked to reclaim the cultural heritage of the Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota community. Through her efforts, she has connected generations—creating pride among youth and elders—and helped the 250 tribal members better understand their Dakota traditions. “The Dakota way of life is special. It’s about caring, sharing, and taking care of others,” she says. “It is more than a religion. It’s a way of life.” ♣ With her late husband, Bob Brown, Linda established a genealogy database and started Dakota language and cultural arts classes. Linda launched a powwow on the tribe’s traditional grounds on the campus



“Linda gave a voice to a community, which before had none.”

—Cheryl and John Fields

of St. Peter’s Church, something that hadn’t been done in almost 100 years; now several thousand people attend this annual event that promotes intercultural cooperation and supports healthy

families and communities. The Browns also played a key role in educating the public about the cultural and historic significance of Pilot Knob and Coldwater Springs, both of which were once threatened by development but are now being preserved. Linda’s other contributions include assisting veterans, delivering holiday gifts, and helping organize World Peace and Prayer Day in the Black Hills. ♣ Linda’s ability to accomplish the seemingly impossible, along with her sincere, warm, and kind-spirited nature, have earned the love and respect of those who know her.



Wafiq Fannoun

Several times each week, Wafiq Fannoun can be found in a juvenile detention facility or at one of Minnesota's prisons in Oak Park Heights, Stillwater, Sandstone, or Lino Lakes. Since the late 1980s, he has reached out to Muslim prisoners, to help build and strengthen their faith. In his work, he first ensures that all Muslim prisoners have access to Friday prayers, an essential component of the Islamic religion.

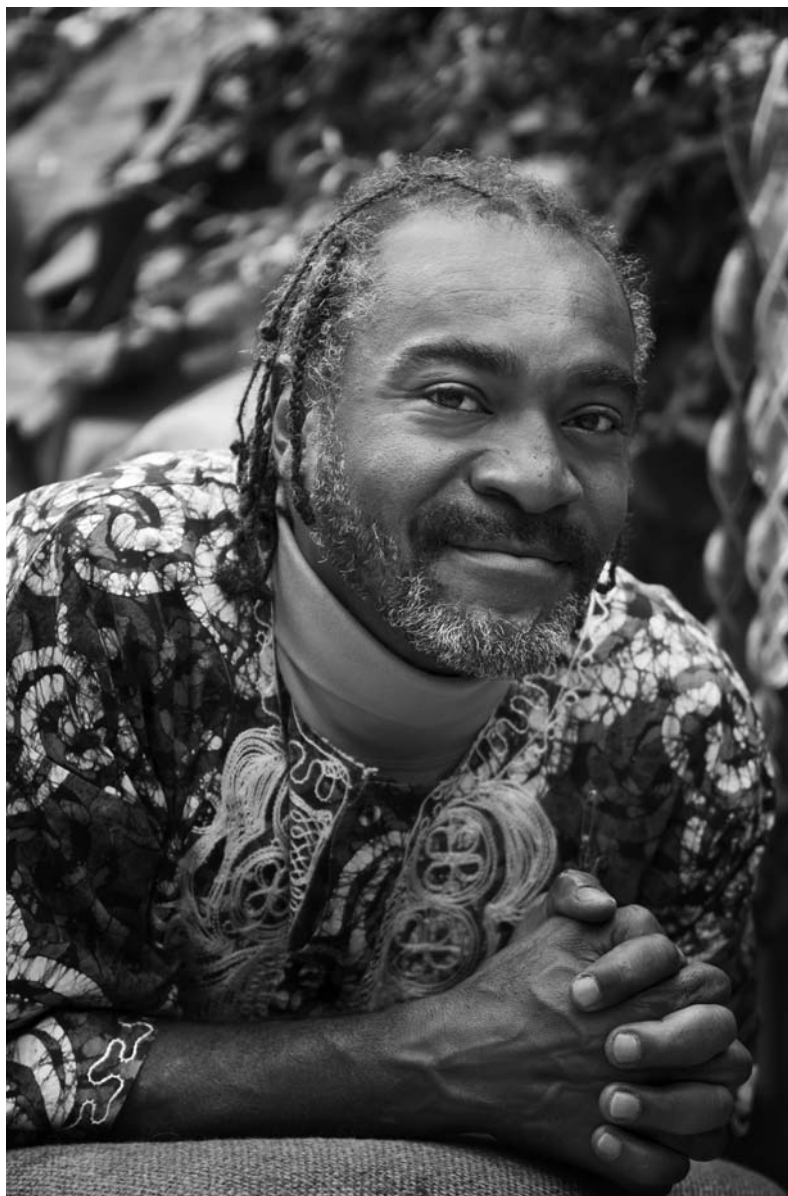


“Wafiq educates anyone he comes in contact with on how to be a better human being and to be conscious of how we treat our fellow humans.”

—Richard Amos


He then establishes regular classes on Islam, and often gives prisoners their first Qur'ans. ♣ “I hope that God the Almighty accepts these efforts,” Fannoun says. “I also hope these efforts have a positive effect—not only on the Muslim community, but on our community as a whole.”

♣ His visits change lives. One former prisoner who now runs two small businesses says Wafiq made him realize that he was not being “the full person my life required of me to others, my family, and myself.” ♣ Fannoun also volunteers his time to teach others about Islam, inside and outside prison walls. This work increased after September 11, 2001, when he realized how important it is to correct misperceptions about Islam. He now speaks frequently on Islam at many churches and high schools. ♣ Wafiq believes the world is one family, a principle he teaches with patience and humility to his children and others.



Melvin Giles

Melvin Giles is a community builder, a peacemaker, and a selfless volunteer. He is the founder of Peaceful Love Warriors, which plants “peace poles” in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Red Wing, and other Minnesota towns. The 8-foot tall, four-sided posts are inscribed in four languages with a simple hope: “May Peace Prevail on Earth.” ♣ “It is a symbolic way to show a commitment to peace,” Melvin says. For the past nine years, he has organized peace celebrations to unite the St. Paul police,



“Melvin Giles lives life with enthusiasm and is well known in his community as being someone you can trust.”

—Mary Salter

neighborhood groups, Bethel University, 4-H Clubs, and a host of other groups. In addition, he volunteers his time at the Animal Ark Animal Shelter, donating 40-50 hours a month to help with the trapping, neutering, and release of feral cat populations. ♣ Melvin’s compassion is at once magical and

strategic. He has even found opportunities to combine peacemaking with his shelter work—planting peace poles at the animal shelter, building a peace garden with dozens of donated day lilies, and contributing ferns to a “shady oasis” wooded area where people can spend time with homeless dogs. ♣ His colleagues know him to be a born leader and an ebullient inspiration. One day, while volunteering with a group of rambunctious second graders, he took out a bottle of soap bubbles, blew a few, and held up his fingers in a peace sign. As the bubbles rose into the air, observers say you could have heard a pin drop. For Melvin, establishing a happy and inviting atmosphere is often the first step toward creative solutions.



Ora Hokes

Ora Hokes is transforming the health of her community Sunday by Sunday. A member of the Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church for 25 years, Hokes saw the alarming health-related risk factors affecting the African American community, and took action. ♣ In 2003, after years of service with the Sabathani Community Center and its Way to Grow program, she began volunteering with the American Red Cross and American Heart Association. Working with her pastor, she created the Health Sundays program to provide monthly health information to her congregation. Partnering with nurses and



“My grandmother is a very caring person who volunteers to help her community be stronger.”

—Terrick Lavell Smith

others from the congregation, and using additional resources from the American Cancer Society and the Stairstep Foundation’s Health Initiative, she implemented monthly blood pressure checks, distributed health information on sexually transmitted diseases, instituted a

“Stomp Out Stroke” awareness program, and started the Promised Land Fellowship walking program which focuses on weight loss, nutrition, and exercise. “My mother was my inspiration,” Ora says. “She had the gift of healing.” ♣ Ora is a lifelong advocate for continuing education. She returned to school after her two children were grown, and has since received an Associate of Arts degree from Minneapolis Community College, a Bachelor of Arts degree from Augsburg’s Weekend College, a Master of Arts degree from the University of St. Thomas, and a parent educator license from the University of Minnesota. It seems no challenge is too big for Ora Hokes.



Beth Holger

Homeless and prostituted youth have a friend and advocate in Beth Holger. Since 1999, she has served children and young adults at Avenues for Homeless Youth and the Bridge for Runaway Youth. After three years at Avenues, Beth became the homeless youth services supervisor at the Bridge, where she works with the Street Outreach, Transitional Housing, and Health Care programs. In 2004, Avenues had to suspend services because of a lack of funding, but Beth worked with the Bridge and Avenues so the shelter could reopen in August 2005. ♣ In addition, Beth spends many early morning hours on the streets, reaching out to homeless youth. These young



“She lives, breathes, and fights for homeless youth in everything she does.”

—Michelle Basham

people are often prostituted by family members or other adults, and building relationships with them or any youth living on the streets is difficult. But Beth has an ability to establish trust with them. It’s the young people themselves

who inspire Beth: “They are able to face crisis, hardship, and violence, but still manage to be resilient, strong, and have goals for themselves.” ♣ Beth also has been a “Big Sis” through the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program, and she coaches track for John F. Kennedy High School and North Commons Park. She is a board member for the Coalition for the Homeless and is a member of Streetworks, the Youth Prostitution Taskforce, and the Minnesota Youth Services Association. Beth’s courage, compassion, and insight have proven invaluable to improve the lives of homeless youth.



Curtis Levang

Curtis Levang's upbringing in the small town of Adams, North Dakota, taught him a lot about hard work, determination, and the fact that most people need help at some point in life. Curt has gone above and beyond what most consider being a good neighbor. His aid to people falling through the cracks has helped them find stability, employment, and self-respect.

"I wanted to give back everything I have gotten from the community because sometimes people need a little extra help from their neighbors," he says. ♣ As the first board member for The Sharington Place in Waverly, Minnesota, Curt was



"Curt has been the stabilizing hand for a lot of tottering folks."

—Joel R. Swedberg

instrumental in establishing the nonprofit organization, which helps at-risk youth transition into society when they come of age. At St. John's Lutheran Church, he set up and manages several four-year scholarship programs. He also

leads the Good Samaritan program where he spends time with people in need and points them in the right direction. When funds are not available, Curt often uses his own money to provide a motel room, food, or rent payment—not as hand-outs, but as a means to help each person achieve long-term success. ♣ Curt's compassion extends to children and adults alike. As a former elementary school principal in the Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted School District, he established and now manages more than 20 scholarships through the PTA. Community residents know they can count on Curt to help them sort out almost any problem.



Larry and Noreen Luck

Helping others is a way of life for Larry and Noreen Luck; it comes as naturally as breathing. When volunteering for the St. Stephen's Human Services homeless shelter, Noreen always brings her sewing machine and mends the guests' clothes—in addition to baking cookies and cakes. Larry helps the busy staff by cleaning and reorganizing closets and bookshelves. Together they organize clothing and toiletry drives and support shelter staff by donating use



**“They are quiet,
humble people who
change the world
in so many
positive ways.”**

—Mary Deaner

of their north woods cabin for staff retreats. And each Christmas they host a holiday party for special needs adults in their home. ♣ “Our basic motivation for volunteering is a response to the consistent Gospel message of caring for those in need. Our lives

are enriched by the people we serve,” the Lucks say. ♣ The Lucks also volunteer for Kateri, a residence program for Native American women in recovery, collecting household goods and scouting for donated furniture for the women to use when they move into their own homes. They are advocates, pressing elected officials for systemic change in affordable housing, health care for low-income people, and the criminal justice system. A retired math teacher, Larry also volunteers with the Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and encourages today's educators to be enthusiastic teachers of math. ♣ Married for 47 years, the Lucks serve the community with a spirit of joy and warmth that rejuvenates and heals those in need.



Hedwidge (Hedy) M. Tripp

In St. Cloud, Hedy Tripp is known as a shining gem. As a relentless volunteer on issues of Asian American history, breast cancer, discrimination, racism, social justice, and globalization, it is easy to see exactly why she is so valued within her community. ♣ Hedy understands the value of art and creativity in a child's life. Through her work at the Multicultural Children's Art Connection, she has enriched the social, physical, and cultural development of children of color in central Minnesota. "It's rewarding to see children become self-confident," she says. "They're able to stand up and be proud of who they are culturally and ethnically." ♣ Hedy's drive to connect people has led her to spend countless hours transporting children and encouraging



"Hedy is a strong, quiet force in our community. She has the know-how and the heart to get things done."


—Debra Leigh

their participation in the multicultural programs. She has directed several performances commemorating the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Black History Month, and Human Rights Day. Hedy has provided leadership for the Art Connection by serving as a board member, sharing fundraising expertise, and volunteering as interim executive director and artistic director. ♣ In addition to impacting the lives of children in St. Cloud, Hedy serves as a community leader and gives her time—without hesitation—to the many volunteer endeavors she champions. Passionate about children, education, building the arts, and creating a livable community, Hedy has worked to teach St. Cloud residents how to give back, and encouraged them to take an active role in creating their own community.



Sister Jean Thuerauf

Love for others, hard work, strong morals, and self-sufficiency are values that Sister Jean Thuerauf not only embodies, but also shares with the thousands of people she has touched throughout her life. As the founder and spiritual director of



“Her goal is to be a loving presence to the poor, especially children, on the north side, and to provide them with values and support to become spiritually and vocationally healthy adults.”

—John Mauriel

Mercy Missionaries, Sister Jean has served as a loving presence to children and families on the north side of Minneapolis for 30 years. Watching as many of these children and their parents overcome numerous obstacles to rise out of poverty, she says, “I get to see people come alive. They turn from negative thinking to a new hope.” ♣ Since realizing her

calling to help the poor in 1976, Sister Jean has worked tirelessly in north Minneapolis to promote the same virtues of hard work and self-sufficiency she learned growing up on a farm in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The Cookie Cart program, founded by Sister Jean in the 1970s, continues to teach work ethics to thousands of teens while providing them with jobs operating a bakery and selling cookies. She also organized a series of dialogues in the Jordan neighborhood of north Minneapolis to help restore peace and promote a safe environment for residents. Sister Jean’s current project in her unending work with the poor is Family Builders, a program to help families with children purchase homes and live financially responsible lives.

Previous Recipients

Since 1985, The McKnight Foundation has honored 220 recipients of the Virginia McKnight Binger Awards in Human Service, including this year's honorees.

♣ Previous recipients are listed below:

2004

James Andre
Elsie Dugar
Mahmoud El-Kati
Donna Gillen
Mary Gnerer
Daniel Hawkins
Rayome Clark Koehler
Mary Maas
Margaret McBride
Christine Norton
Kay Trainor
Carol Voss

2003

Cal Appleby
James Dodge
Jayne Frank
Linda Jemison
Cindy Johnson
Nathaniel Khaliq
Nancy Meyers
Rajiv Shah
John Siegfried
Char Thompson

2002

Andrew Benjamin
Martha Cardenas
Bonham Cross
Mohamed Essa
Ann Hooley
Jacqueline Kavanagh
Ed and Fern Ostberg
Ron Schwartz
Margaret Smith
Gail Weigle

2001

Susan Baxter
George Failes
Bertha Givins
Maria Inés Hitateguy
Barb King
Marge Melich
Kristine Reiter
Muriel Simmons
V.J. Smith
Sang Vu

2000

Jean Andrews
Melvin Carter, Jr.
Sylvia Carty
Richard Endres
John and Julie Funari
Hazel Jacobson
Raleigh Kent
George Nelsen
Delroy Schoenleben
Manuel Zuniga

1999

Henry Bruns
Ernesto DelVillar, Sr.
Marcelle Diedrich
Denise Gubrud and
Margarita Reese
Darlene Edwards
Phoenix Hill
Geraldine Hull
Ardis Knutson
Yako Myers
Joyce Segelbaum

1998

Christine Barich
Dawn Glaser-Falk
Joe Huber
Michael Kirk
Kevin L. Perez
Rodriguez
Edwin Reich
Scott Schlaffman
Choua "Mindy" Thao
Georgeanna Toftum
Clorasteen Wilson

1997

Marjory Aldrich
Jim Christy
Dianne Kimm
Allan Law
Sue Liedl
Larry Cloud Morgan
William Radueg
RaeAnn Ruth
Frankie and
Velma Tyson
Peggy Wells

1996

Vivian Blount
Cynthia Hawkins
Gregory Horan
Dale Hulme
Joe LaGarde
Percy and Lillian Olson
Joan Peterson
Jody Porter
Dave Ronning
Georgia Theis

1995

Laurice Beaudry
Dianne Binns
Leonard Gloeb
Fran Heitzman
Algjuan Hixon
Bruce Lubitz
Mary Robillard
Bill Rowe
Pat Schwartz
Jamie Slattery

1994

John Bobolink
Lori Ellis Boswell
Bill Driscoll
Janet Gostanczik
Shirley Ellen Jensen
Art Johnson
James Francis Kelly
Katherine G. King
Forrest R. Osterholm
Fred Rupp

1993

Eileen Bohn
Francisco Caballero
Sandra Gessler
Frank R. Johnson
David Lund
Don Mooney
Tyrone Smith
Art Stoeberl
Sheila WhiteEagle
Eleanore Whitmyre

1992

Peggy Holmes
Bellecourt
Dorothy Bilheimer
Jane Blattner
Eugene Chelberg
Dr. Kenneth and
Grace Covey
Dorothy Haynes
Norma Schleppegrell
Roger and
Donna Urbanski
Quang Vu
Glen Wilfong

1991

Cynthia Ann Barry
Shirley Benitez
Julia Dinsmore
Dan Edgar
Terry Ford
Alice McHie
Kouthong Vixayvong
Walter White
Marie Wing
Mary Stier Winkels

1990

Ruby Alexander
Dan Celentano
Cheryl Ford
Muriel Gaines
Patrick Hartigan
Tri Dinh Nguyen
Phillip Sayers
Sister Leamore Stanton
John Stone
Diane Williams

1989

David L. Asmus
Lois V. Boylan
Ron Cronick
Phyllis Gross
Loeung Khi
Dana Lehrer
Sister Charlotte A.
Madigan
William O'Connell
Leo Treadway
Diane Ziegler

1988

Jewell Anderson
Willard A. Brunelle
Dollie D. Foster
Carol LaFavor
Kwame McDonald
Rosita Meehan
Marvin S. Moe
Anastasia Sery
Ray Wilson
Winona Wilson

1987

Robert L. Buckley
Linda Byrne
Mary Jo Copeland
Kathy J. Davis
John Fields
Sandra Huff
Mazi E. Johnson
Lou Anne Kling
Norma P. McDuffie
Pat Schmidgall

1986

Barbara J. Colhapp
San Juana Flores
Bernice E. Genereux
Flo Golod
Louise T. James
Maxine M. Kruschke
Robert Russell
Dana Lee Shato
Vernell Wabasha
Dellie Walz

1985

Ruth G. Andberg
Laurie Colbeck
Alieene Davis
Juanita G. Espinosa
Debra Jones
Elaine La Canne
Grace L. Sandness
Lucille T. Silk
Connie Strandberg
Justina Violette



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