

1214.1

Nomination for

CORA AND JOHN SPARROWK PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Recognizing that the Cora and John Sparrowk President's Award shall be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., June 2019, to a person who a) is an American Baptist; b) has over a period of years made an exceptional and outstanding contribution to the life of Christ's Church; and c) in life and service manifests richly the fruits and gifts of the Spirit, I wish to nominate

Reverend Charles and Marie Mercer
(Name)

I feel that the nominee has made an exceptional and outstanding contribution to the life of Christ's Church because: *(use additional page if needed)*

See attached pages

I feel that the nominee in life and service manifests richly the fruits and the gifts of the Spirit because: *(use additional page if needed)*

See attached pages

Nominee's Address Rev. Charles and Marie Mercer, 2381 Generation Dr, Reston VA 20191

Phone Number 571-201-8839 Church Membership Washington Plaza Baptist Church

Submitted by Reverend Michelle Nickens, Pastor Phone Number 703-471-5225

(please print)
Address 1615 Washington Plaza West, Reston VA 20190

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 14, 2018 to:

Acting General Secretary Rev. Dr. C Jeff Woods
American Baptist Churches USA
P. O. Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851
or Fax: 610-768-2275

Sparrowk Presidents Award Nomination: Charles and Marie Mercer

I feel that the nominee has made an exceptional and outstanding contribution to the life of Christ's Church because:

Charles and Marie Mercer have lived lives radically committed to proclaiming the love of Christ and live into the Beloved Community throughout the world in both word and deed. Charles has served in ordained ministry for over 60 years, with Maria actively by his side as a wife, social worker, and partner in ministry. They have shared a passion for justice and spreading the gospel that began when they met and worked together at the historic East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York City, and that shared passion continued when as a young married couple they entered into international missions work in Yugoslavia working with oppressed churches. This work eventually led to their being expelled by the Yugoslavian government and banned for 20 years. Once the ban was removed, they returned to renew and strengthen relationships.

Upon his expulsion from Yugoslavia, Charles then intentionally pastored at storefront churches in Detroit that served marginalized people of various ethnicities and backgrounds. This diverse setting inspired Maria to return to school to earn a Masters in Social Work, which she utilized for many years in refugee advocacy and support work.

Throughout their lives the Mercers have stood against racism, sexism and any kind of 'ism' that restricts people from living out the God given image with which they've been created. From Detroit, Charles was called to serve Metropolitan Associates of Philadelphia, an urban renewal and evangelical project initiated by Rev. Dr. Jitsuo Morikawa of National Ministries. While in that setting, Maria was part of a unique team of women who came together to fight prejudice. Their group was comprised of an African American, Jewish, Protestant, and Muslim women who would travel to schools to share their journeys and perspectives to counter racism and prejudice.

Charles later served two additional churches, FBC of Troy, NY and finally Olivet Baptist Church in Valley Stream. During those years, he led a group sponsored by BPFNA (Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America) to Russia to develop discussions between Orthodox and Protestant churches. Also, during those years, Charles and Marie both were heavily involved with resettling Vietnamese refugees and helped to sponsor one family in particular with whom they still keep in touch.

After retiring, Charles not only served as an interim pastor in several churches through the Interim Ministry program but also served as an interim for International Ministries. He and Maria were both called to serve the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy on two separate occasions where they developed ties between Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Churches throughout Moscow and also ran a soup kitchen.

As members of Washington Plaza Baptist Church, Charles and Maria are important leaders in advocacy and justice work, the ESL program, the missions committee, church council, and community volunteerism.

So much more could be written, but worth noting is that they have the fairly unique experience of serving the breadth of ABC ministries, having served in International Ministries (Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy), American Baptist Home Mission Societies (in Jitsuo Morikawa's evangelism initiative), MMBB (as a goodwill ambassador after "retiring"!) and the

Sparrowk Presidents Award Nomination: Charles and Marie Mercer

Office of the General Secretary in Transition Ministries (as an interim pastor) as well as a local church pastor.

Throughout their lives and even today, they continue to open their home and their heart to those in need, and to actively provide support, wisdom, and kindness to all in the name of Christ.

I feel that the nominee in life and service manifests richly the fruits and gifts of the Spirit because:

From what has already been shared, you can see how they have extravagantly loved God and loved others, living out and spreading a radical love to all! They exhibit and have been agents of God's love, joy, and peace in this world through concrete acts of patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and faithfulness. Through them, people experience God's loving embrace and see what it means to live as true Christians, serving as the hands and feet of Christ. Over the course of their ministry, both personally and professionally, they have modeled servant leadership, sought to live into the Beloved Community and lived out what it means to be a true Christian.

SPARROWK PRESIDENT'S AWARD

RECIPIENTS

1981	Elizabeth P. Caudill, Charleston, West Virginia, Bethel Baptist Church, South Charleston, West Virginia
1983	Esther Davis, Chicago, Illinois, Woodlawn Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois
1985	Norman E. Joslin, Buffalo, New York
1987	Jimmie A. Morrison, Tonawanda, New York, Brighton Community Church, Tonawanda, New York
1989	Lily Lawrence Lyons, St. John Missionary Baptist Church, Springfield, Ohio
1991	Astrid Peterson, First Chinese Baptist Church, San Francisco, California, former ABC missionary in China (20 years)
1993	Richard Brownlee, White Bear Lake, Minnesota, Woodbury Baptist Church, Woodbury, MN
1995	Eric & Hazel Stettner, Rochester, New York, Lake Avenue Baptist Church, Rochester, New York
1997	Gilbert Brink, Alhambra, California, First Baptist Church, Monrovia, California
1999	Veronica Lanier, Melrose, Massachusetts, First Baptist Church, Medford, Massachusetts
2001	Martha Cortner Pixley, Kalamazoo, Michigan, First Baptist Church
2003	Loris B. Coletta, Aptos, California, First Baptist Church, Salinas CA
2005	Charles and Barbara Chicks, Sunnyvale, CA, First Baptist Church, Santa Clara, CA
2007	Judge Albert Matthews, Industry, CA, Second Baptist Church, Los Angeles
2009	Robert and Margene Phares, First Baptist Church, North Platte, NE
2011	Yosh Nakagawa, Mercer Island, WA
2013	Andrew and Beverly Davison, Madison, WI
2015	David G. Gnirk, Burke, South Dakota
2017	Emilie Margaret Ballard, Claremont, CA and Newton Old Crow, Sr., Lodge Grass, MT



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

*Dr. C. Jeff Woods
Acting General Secretary*

October 3, 2018

TO: ABCUSA Directors

Dear Friends:

At each Biennial Meeting, the Cora and John Sparrowk President's Award is presented on behalf of the Board of General Ministries to an exceptional Christian. The recipient must be an American Baptist who has over a period of years made an exceptional and outstanding contribution to the life of Christ's Church and who in life and service manifests richly the fruits and gifts of the Spirit.

This award takes the form of a plaque recording the presentation, a written testimony to the life and service of the recipient being honored and a monetary gift.

As a member of the Board of General Ministries you are asked to give prayerful consideration to persons who would be worthy candidates. Nominations are to be sent to me on the enclosed form for receipt **on or before December 14, 2018**. The President, Vice President and immediate Past President will select a recipient from among those nominated for confirmation by the Executive Committee of the Board of General Ministries. Announcement of the recipient will be made to the Board of General Ministries and presentation of the award will take place at the Biennial Meeting in Virginia Beach in June 2019.

Please use the Nomination Form provided to submit your nomination. For your information, I have also provided a list of past recipients of the President's Award.

If you have questions, please be in touch with me. You have our gratitude for your willingness to take part in this sensitive and significant task.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. C. Jeff Woods".

Dr. C. Jeff Woods
Acting General Secretary

Enclosures: Nomination Form 1214.1
 President's Award Recipients

cc: National Leadership Council