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2023 BISHOP'S AWARD BIOGRAPHIES

**Ceremony held at
The California-Pacific
Annual Conference**

**Saturday, June 17, 2023
at 12:00 p.m. PST
Sheraton Gateway
Los Angeles Hotel**

PDF version: <https://www.calpacumc.org/ac2023/>

**BISHOP'S
AWARD**

QR Code:



As an annual tradition, our Bishops have honored
distinguished clergy and laypersons
who have devoted their lives to extraordinary service
to The California-Pacific Annual Conference

- Bishop Dottie Escobedo Frank

2023 Recipients

Rev. Dr. Kimball Boyd Coburn, Sr.

Ruth Conley

Rev. Paul Hill

Rev. Thomas Hill, III

SongJa Park

Rev. Dr. Dale Smith

Betty Venegas-Huebner

2022 Recipients

Rev. Rex Britt
Patricia Coots
Rev. Sylvester Gillespie
Jacquelynn Hawthorne
Judy Lewis
Doug Lewis
Lori Meaders
Ellen Peterson
Alma Roberts
Rev. Brenda Simonds

2021 Recipients

J. André Aldridge
Rev. David O. Beadle
Winifred (Winnie) Ching
Rev. Dr. Roy Lewis Fry, Jr.
Rev. Robert Preston Price, III
Rev. Dr. Sharon Rhodes-Wickett
Jose Rodriguez
Joyce L. Zirkle

2020 Recipients

Rev. James Conn
Connee Freeman
Phil Freeman
Dan Gara
Lorraine Kadooka
Rev. Etuini Kelemeni
Tupou Seini Kelemeni
Rev. David Richardson
Ana-Haydée Urda

2019 Recipients

Rev. Faith Joanne Conklin
Kenneth Ellis
Rev. Edward A. Hoffman
(posthumously)
Rev. Dr. Woong-Min Kim
Rev. Kenneth E. McMillan
(posthumously)
M. Tyler Pottenger
Tetsu Tanimoto
George Williams

2018 Recipients

Francis Fukumoto
JoAnn Yoon Fukumoto
Howard Hudson
Rev. Dan Kennedy
Rev. Nancy G. Self
Rev. Dr. Robert Smith
Rev. Dr. F. Thomas Trotter
Rev. J. Irwin Trotter
Rev. Mark C. Trotter

2017 Recipients

Rev. Dr. John Cobb, Jr.
Gaunnie Hardin Dixon
Becky Haase
Stephen F. Harbison
Byron Hayes, Jr.
Rev. James M. Lawson, Jr.

Rev. Dr. Kimball Boyd Coburn Sr.

Kimball Coburn grew up in the Methodist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. As a teenager in the late 1950s, he enjoyed music and was successful in becoming a local rock 'n roll singer, writer, and recording artist. At the young age of 19, he married his high school sweetheart, Pam Sisk.

They moved to Los Angeles so Kimball could continue pursuing his career as a music artist. They soon found a local church and got involved. Kimball sang in the choir, Pam taught Sunday School, and together, they led the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) on Sunday nights.

Over the next couple of years, Kimball's desire for success was eclipsed by the call to ministry. So, he returned to Tennessee to get his B.A. at the University of Tennessee in Martin (1971), then to California to receive his Doctor of Ministry degree from the Claremont School of Theology (1975).

After serving twelve years as a student and senior pastor in country, suburban, and city churches, Kimball took a leave of absence from the California-Pacific Conference in 1979 to prayerfully consider God's Call within a Call. Kimball, Pam, and their four children moved to Claremont. He soon began his ministry as a servant evangelist, taking the confronting, challenging, loving, and hopeful Good News to all who would listen.

Many of Kimball's concerned colleagues tried to persuade him to be sensible with his ministerial career and family responsibilities – especially because there was no official position for a Conference Evangelist in the Cal-Pac Conference. Kimball would have no salary, parsonage, medical care, or pension. But he would not be swayed. His faith in God to lead and provide was absolute. He took a giant leap and has never looked back.

Kimball Coburn has proclaimed God's Call to be the Church in over six hundred evangelism events in thirteen states for forty-four years. Kimball continues to create music and videos that inspire. As a result, thousands of people have responded to the Call and have led their congregations to renewed vision and purpose.

In 1981 Bishop Jack Tuell appointed Kimball to a ministry of Evangelism in the Prophetic Spirit. He watched over him ~ believed in him and was proud of him. He wrote a letter to Kimball and his Ministry's Board of Directors saying he never regretted opening the door for Kimball who had dared to dream and risked all he had in doing so. He went on to say, "Kimball is a loving, caring, spirit-filled servant, whose unpretentious lifestyle bears mute authenticity of his ministry."

Ruth Markham Conley

- Born and always lived in Los Angeles
- Mother of two adult children Rodney & Rhonda
- Grandmother of 4
- Great-grandmother of 4
- Member of Heritage (formally Wesley/Bowen) since 1955
- Retired from Kaiser Permanente Watts Counseling & Learning Center 40 years of employment.
- Early Childhood Development Certificate from UCLA
- Bachelor's degree from Pacific Oaks
- Master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) with Specialization in African American Families

Youth Coordinator Career

1. Began 1984 under the leadership of Sylvester Gillespie at Wesley UMC assisted by Rev. Andrew Robinson Gaither
2. 1985 invited and participated as African American leader on the Design Team for National Youth event – Youth '88 forerunner of Youth 2023
3. Served as local church youth coordinator.
4. Designed and implemented Holy Week camp for Conference African American youth.
5. Annual Conference Youth Coordinator (during interim vacant staff position)
6. Two terms Jurisdiction Youth Coordinator (in Boise when Bishop Talbert was elected)
7. Involved in youth ministry at age 13 under the leadership of Rev Melvin and Ethel Lou Talbert. It was such an awesome and amazing experience, I wanted to duplicate it for youth in my ministry.

Rev. Paul Anthony Hill

Paul Hill was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. He began his undergraduate degree at East Texas State University, but his studies were interrupted by the military draft. He served in the U.S. Army for two years. After his military service, he transferred to North Texas State University where he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology. Paul resisted an early call to ministry. Upon acknowledging his call and receiving confirmation from his home church pastor (the Reverend Zan Holmes), he moved to Boston, Massachusetts where he pursued a master's degree in Pastoral Care and Counseling at Boston University School of Theology. After earning his master's degree in 1980, he returned to Dallas where he was ordained elder by The United Methodist Church (North Texas Conference).

During his active ministry, Paul served the following local churches (list is in chronological order):

1. Campus Minister and New Testament Instructor at North Texas State University and Texas Woman's University where he developed a ministry for Black students
2. Associate Pastor at Forest Hills UMC in Fort Worth, Texas (an open itinerancy appointment) where he led a neighborhood evangelism campaign
3. Associate Pastor at Hamilton Park UMC in Dallas, Texas where he developed Bible studies and life enrichment seminars for seniors
4. Pastor at Bowen Memorial UMC in Los Angeles, CA where he spearheaded ministry to Central American immigrants, supported a community worker who started English classes for native Spanish speakers and initiated a banner-making ministry
5. Pastor at Compton First UMC in Compton, CA where he forged a stronger relationship with the Tongan ministry that shared facilities
6. Pastor at St. Paul's UMC in Tarzana, CA (an open itinerancy appointment) where he provided leadership for children's Sunday School and children's choir
7. Associate Pastor and Interim Senior Pastor at Holman UMC where he expanded children's ministry activities and increased parental engagement with children and youth ministries
8. Pastor at Grace UMC Los Angeles (18 years) where he created the 50+ Ministry, HIV/AIDS outreach and testing on the church campus, experienced growth in children and youth engagement

Continued

Affiliations and Engagements beyond the local church:

- Instructor and co-director at Claremont School of Theology Local Pastor's Licensing School for five summers
- Board Member, Grace Community Outreach Foundation (501C3)
- With lay leadership, developed a Children's Defense Fund Freedom School summer camp for children and youth at West Los Angeles College in Culver City, CA
- Co-Dean for Strength for the Journey life enrichment camping program for persons living with HIV/AIDS
- Developed HIV/prevention education seminars co-sponsored by the Grace United Methodist Men
- Oversaw a major renovation project of the Grace UMC kitchen and sanctuary
- Member, Clergy, and Laity United for People Empowerment (CLUE)

Personal

Paul and his wife, Allyson, have been married for 39 years and are the parents of two adult sons.

Rev. Thomas Hill III

Thomas Hill III was born, raised, and educated in Dallas, Texas. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas. He began his ministry vocation in 1982 after receiving his Master of Divinity from Boston University. After graduation, Thomas and his wife, Carla, moved back to Los Angeles where Thomas was ordained elder within The United Methodist Church.

During his active ministry, he served the following local churches:

1. Los Angeles – Calvary UMC (1982-83) where he oversaw a fellowship hall refurbishment project.
2. Holman United Methodist Church (1983-1989) where he served as the lead on the multi-purpose building project and assisted in creating Discipleship Week.
3. Inglewood First UMC (1989-1993) where he oversaw the Wesley Hall refurbishing project.
4. Venice UMC (1993-2001) where he oversaw property improvements, established Vacation Bible School for children and adults, and established a Venice Beach ministry. Based on congregational needs, he established a monthly coffee house on Sunday evenings which provided refreshments and an open mic for musicians and poets.
5. Vermont Square/Wesley Parish (2012 until his retirement) where he re-ordered congregational worship and outreach.

Other appointments included Los Angeles District Coordinator for Relief Services where with the Reverends James Lawson and Sandra Olewine, as well as other Cal-Pac Conference ministers, delivered food, supplies, and aid to members and community members impacted by the 1992 Los Angeles social unrest following the acquittal of the police charged in the beating of Rodney King. In addition, he served on the following boards and agencies: Board of Ordained Ministry, Board of Church and Society, Global Ministries, Urban Foundation, Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), SCLA, and NAACP.

Following his appointment at Venice UMC, in 2001, Thomas was appointed District Superintendent (DS) of the Pasadena District where he served an extended term until 2007. After serving as DS, Thomas was appointed as Cal-Pac Director of Connections overseeing ministries engaged in justice and compassion and representing the conference in ecumenical ministries.

Thomas understood his ministry to be an extension of discipleship to the Risen Christ. He once said, "Ministry to me is a lifelong journey of faith whereby we live out our understandings of what it means to be in the service of others for the sake of Jesus Christ." Thomas viewed his ministry as one that was a means to the Kingdom of God, empowering one's life that was freeing and forgiving as opposed to one that had a set of restrictions.

Thomas and his now-deceased wife, Carla, have two loving adult daughters who reside in the Los Angeles area.

SongJa Park

Education

- Graduated from Kyung Gi Girls High School in Seoul, Korea
- Received BA from Ewha Woman's University in Seoul, Korea
- Received MS from Iowa State University
- Studied at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis and Claremont Theological Seminary in California for the requirement for Diaconal Minister
- Ordained as a Diaconal Minister in the California-Pacific Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Employment

- School Counselor at West Marshall Community School in Iowa
- School Counselor in San Diego School District in San Diego
- Director of the Pan Asian Parent Education Project in San Diego
- Executive Director of the Korean Family Counseling Center in Los Angeles
- Associate Council Director of Nurture Ministries in California-Pacific Conference for 13 years
- Children's Ministry Director at Nasung Korean Methodist Church in Los Angeles

Experience

- Sunday School Teacher
- Speaker for spiritual formation
- A lay leader in the local church
- Vice Chair, National Korean American Ministry Council of UMC
- Member, General Board of Discipleship of UMC
- Delegate to General and Jurisdictional Conference of UMC (3 times)

Personal

Surviving Spouse of the Rev. Jeon Shoung Park, former District Superintendent of the Long Beach District. Mother of two Daughters, Michelle Park, minister of Atascadero United Methodist Church, Kristi Steinberg, Son-in Law, Richard Steinberg and three grandchildren.

Rev. Dr. Dale Smith

Dr. Dale and Miriam Smith were both born in Ohio. He received his Local Preacher's License at the age of 18 and was appointed to his first church in Louisiana as a student pastor when he was 22. He received the Outstanding Rural Pastor of the Year Award in the North Texas Conference at age 28 while still in seminary. He has a B.A. from Southeastern University, Hammond, Louisiana, Master of Divinity from Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, and a Doctor of Ministry from Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, California. Serving pastorates for 43 years in Louisiana, Texas, Arizona Hawaii, and California, he retired from the local church ministry in 1993. Both he and Miriam, a graduate of Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, Ohio, continued as conference volunteers with Covenant Relationship for a Better World, working out of their home office in Pomona, California.

Supporting missionaries in their work has always been a high priority. In that vein, Dr. Smith served as District Director of Missions for the Arizona, Hawaii, Los Angeles, and Riverside Districts while serving pastorates in those areas. In 1990 he and Miriam began "Covenant Relationship for a Better World," working with churches in The California-Pacific Conference in support of the General Board of Global Ministries missionaries of The United Methodist Church.

Dr. Smith serves as a summer missionary in Hokkaido, Japan, and Guaymas, Mexico. He and his wife, Miriam Devey Smith took a 3-month sabbatical in 1984 to visit mission stations in 17 countries in an around-the-world trip. In 1988 they were part of the first Pasadena District summer work team to Maua, Kenya when the project was rebuilding the water system to Maua Hospital. In the summer of 1995, they again went as Volunteers in Mission with the work team from Upland U.M.C. in Pachica, Chile at the Kusayapu Agricultural Institute for Andean Youth. In March of 1997, Dale and Miriam joined with a team in Ulyanovsk, Russia working with a new Methodist congregation. In the summer of 1997, Dr. Smith went to South Carolina with a conference work team to help rebuild one of the Black Churches that had been burned in a hate crime. In August of 2000, Dale and Miriam spent two weeks with CAL-PAC missionary, Rev. Sandra Olewine, in Jerusalem visiting with Palestinians on the peace process.

Booklets authored or edited by Dr. Dale Smith, with Miriam's computer assistance, are: *Motivation in Mission Outreach*, *Facing Up to be Alive in Mission*, *You Can Help Build a Better World* and *What in God's World Can You Do?* They have edited *Missionary Devotions for Advent* each year from 1994 to 2004 and the *Directory of Conference-Related Missionaries and Supporting Churches* each year from 1990 to 2005.

For 10 years, they organized and presented the Annual Conference Missionary Luncheon, featuring missionary speakers and awards for the outstanding missionary supporting churches. It is these pastors and congregations who are to be commended for their generosity and commitment.

Betty Venegas-Huebner

I was blessed to be born in a Christian home, in the parsonage of the church in McAllen, Texas where my father was the pastor. I am the eldest of five children born to Rev. Doroteo and Elena Venegas.

At age 7, at my father's request, I began to take piano lessons. The first hymn I learned was "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." I soon began playing for Sunday services. This was the beginning of the many years I served as the pianist and organist at the many churches my father pastored.

In 1948, my family moved from Texas to California. He pastored several churches throughout California, including La Plaza UMC.

I attended Pasadena High School and Pasadena City College. During this time, I became very involved with the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF). I was appointed president of the Latin American Youth Conference, and in 1957 helped to prepare for the integration of the youth groups from the Latin American Provisional Conference and the Southern California Conference. Eventually, the presidents of both conferences co-led the integrated group, and we presided together in Conference activities. We represented the Southern California youth at National Conferences at DePauw University, Denver State University, and in Washington D.C. and New York.

In 1981, I married Rev. Roger Huebner. We spent eleven happy years together before his passing. Some of my favorite memories with him are the times we spent together on Lake Arrowhead in our 1939 Chris Craft boat.

In the late 1990's, I returned to La Plaza UMC and became involved in church activities, playing the piano and singing in the choir. I assumed the position of Treasurer, a position from which I recently retired. For many years I served as a board member of the United Methodist Federal Credit Union, as well as serving on the Conference Board of Pensions and other committees.

A big project I undertook was the organizing and caretaking of the extensive archives of La Plaza UMC. The archives date back to 1899, the year the church was founded. La Plaza UMC has an interesting history, and I am proud to have had the opportunity to safeguard these historical records.

When La Plaza lost its lease on the church, which sits on city-owned property, I helped organize marches to Los Angeles City Hall, where people spoke on our behalf at City Council meetings. Eventually, a new lease was signed. Part of the terms of the new lease included the creation of the La Plaza United Methodist Museum of Social Justice. I am a board member and the treasurer of the museum. I also help train museum docents, educating them on the history of La Plaza UMC.

I know God has guided me throughout my life. He gave me parents who showed me what dedicated service to Him and the church is. I know He has more for me to do and I look forward to what He has planned for me.

