

BISHOP'S AWARD



astonish

THE 42nd ANNUAL SESSION OF THE CALIFORNIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE
JUNE 17-20, 2026 | LA QUINTA, CA | RESIDENT BISHOP DOTTIE ESCOBEDO-FRANK



Ceremony held at
The California-Pacific
Annual Conference

Thursday, June 18, 2026
at 2:00 p.m. PT

La Quinta Resort & Club
La Quinta, California



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

Bishop Dotfire Escobedo-Frank

2026 Recipients

Khanh Doan

Rev. Dr. Edward Hansen

Randa Krakow

Robert N. Mansfield, Jr.

Kara Mark

Rev. Alan Mark

Leah Gallardo Switzer

Suanne Ware-Diaz

For a full list of previous recipients, scan QR Code:



Khanh Doan

Khanh Doan's life is a testament to perseverance, faith, service, and gratitude. Born in Vietnam, he knew hardship and uncertainty from an early age. In 1979, years after the Vietnam War, his parents made the heartbreaking decision to send him away in search of freedom and the chance for a better life. During the journey across the South China Sea, the boat carrying Khanh and 107 other people capsized. By God's grace, only 20 people survived, and Khanh was one of them. It was a life-changing experience that stayed with him forever. In June 1980, Khanh finally found refuge in the United States. Starting over in a new country was not easy, but he met that challenge with determination and hope. He committed himself to education, believing it was the path to opportunity and a brighter future. While learning English and adjusting to a new culture, he attended high school and community college. Through perseverance and hard work, he earned a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry from the University of California, Riverside—an achievement that reflected not only academic success, but also the strength of his spirit. Khanh went on to devote 32 years to public service through his work at the Inland Empire Utilities Agency.

Throughout his career, he became known for his integrity, professionalism, and sincere desire to serve others. His dedication was recognized with multiple Employee of the Quarter, Employee of Semi-annual awards, and in 2008 he was honored as Employee of the Year. When he retired in March 2021, he left behind not only an impressive career, but also a legacy of faithful service and quiet excellence. At the heart of Khanh's life is his family. He has been married for 35 years to his high school friend and lifelong partner, whose love, support, and companionship have been a steady blessing through every season of life.

Together, they raised two sons, now 32 and 27, and passed on the values that have guided Khanh throughout his journey: faith, humility, education, and service. Faith has always been at the center of Khanh's life. Over the years, he has continued to answer God's call through Lay Servant Ministries. He became a Certified Lay Servant in 2007, Certified Lay Speaker in 2023, and Certified Lay Minister in 2024. Today, Khanh serves as the East District Director of Lay Servant Ministries, where he continues to lead with compassion, wisdom, and a servant's heart. From surviving a harrowing journey at sea as a young refugee to becoming a devoted husband, father, public servant, and man of faith, Khanh Doan's life reflects the power of hope, gratitude, and God's sustaining grace.

Rev. Dr. Edward J. Hansen

Friends and colleagues, as I briefly share some highlights of my life, the overarching and enduring thread through it all is gratitude. I give thanks for all I've experienced, all the blessings, and all the people who have helped me along the way.

As a 12-year-old, new resident of Fallbrook, CA, the Fallbrook Methodist Church was a life saver for me. Sunday school, MYF, and the Women's Society of Christian Service's support that enabled me to go to church camp, helped me to know I belonged and planted the seeds of knowing I was loved by God and that the church is a life-giving place.

Being hired by Pacific Beach Methodist Church as their youth director provided experiences that led to my call to ordained ministry. Claremont School of Theology opened my eyes and deepened my understanding of my faith. My one-year internship at the Glide Memorial Methodist Church in San Francisco, 1965-66, put me in touch with the diversity of gay people and prepared me to write my dissertation titled, *The Church's Ministry with Homosexuals*.

My first appointment after seminary was to Chollas View Methodist Church in San Diego, a small interracial congregation, half black and half white, that taught me much about being a pastor and supported me in advocating for relevant social issues, even welcoming a new Metropolitan Community Church congregation to use our facilities on Sunday evenings and allowing me to offer a support group for gay young adults that met in the parsonage.

My experiences as an associate pastor at First United Methodist Church of San Diego gave me another perspective as I served a very large congregation, first doing special ministries with youth, and then membership cultivation and assimilation. Mark Trotter's preaching and leadership was an inspiration.

In 1982, Dick Cain, president of Claremont School of Theology, asked me to become the Director of Development of CST. Lily Foundation provided training for new seminary development officers, and I was included in their program.

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Rev. Dr. Edward J. Hansen

My role at Claremont put me in touch with many of my clergy colleagues and allowed for my participation in dialogues and advocacy in our Conference regarding the church's welcome and inclusion of LGBTQ persons.

I was also allowed to accept the invitation of Rev. Bert All to serve on the staff of the Strength for the Journey retreat for adult men and women living with HIV/AIDS. The first of these retreats was held at Camp Colby early in the summer of 1988 and it had a profound effect on me. I continued to give leadership to this retreat for over 30 years.

In 1995 I left CST and was appointed to serve as the campus minister at Cal-State Long Beach. But I was there less than a year when I was asked by Superintendent Dick Haddon to accept an appointment to Hollywood UMC beginning in July, 1996. It was there that I continued the ministry of welcoming LGBTQ people into active participation and leadership in the congregation and included in my pastoral care persons living with HIV/AIDS.

When I retired in 2006, I continued my active involvement in the Cal-Pac Conference. In 2009 I offered a motion to include time in the 2010 Conference agenda for United Methodist LGBTQ people and family members to tell their stories. The motion was supported and in 2010, we told our stories. It was a powerful experience for us and for many members of our Conference.

Through my participation in the Conference AIDS Task Force, I became acquainted with another colleague who was very engaged in ministry with people living with HIV/AIDS. Rev. Andrew Robinson-Gaither asked the Task Force for financial support for Imani Unidos, a project he started while serving as pastor of Faith UMC located on 108th St. in Los Angeles. His passion for serving the needs of the people of South Los Angeles and his love of the city inspired me even more. I give thanks for his witness and friendship.

As a member of this Cal-Pac Conference and now pastor emeritus of Hollywood UMC, I continue to give thanks for all the blessings of my life: the colleagues, teachers and friends who have encouraged me; the support and affirmations that have come to me along the way; the love and welcome that has been offered throughout my years of experience in the church; and the wondrous and guiding influence of God's Spirit. I am grateful. I feel blessed. Thank you!

Randa Krakow

I was blessed to be born into a traditional Methodist family where my parents didn't smoke, drink, swear, or carouse around at night. My three siblings and I grew up attending church every Sunday. As a youth, I was fortunate to be greatly influenced by our pastor, Irwin Trotter, at Granada Hills Methodist Church. I used to sneak into the little chapel there and pretend to give sermons like Rev. Trotter. Having gone to Camp Cedar Glen when I was 12 and there having given my life to the Lord, I felt a calling to the ministry. However, thinking that all ministers did was give sermons, I knew I could never fulfill my aspiration to be a minister because I stuttered, and I knew I could never give a sermon.

I attended a Methodist college, Cal Western University in Point Loma, where I majored in religion. Having given up on my dream to be a minister, I felt another calling to be an elementary school teacher. It turned out to be 35 fulfilling years of a vocation of service and dedication to children, during which time my stuttering became manageable and now has almost entirely disappeared. I even satisfied a longing to give a sermon a few years ago for United Women in Faith Sunday.

Early on, my mother, Ruth Krakow, who was active in Women's Society of Christian Service and then United Methodist Women, kept inviting me to WSCS teas and UMW fashion shows, but that sort of thing didn't appeal to me at the time. She was active in the Methodist Church throughout her life and was president of the Santa Barbara District of UMW and served at the Conference level. I never thought I would say this, but I am so glad I turned out to be a church lady, just like my mom! She was a great and inspirational model for me, after all.

I have been active in United Women in Faith, the latest incarnation of UMW and WSCS, serving on the South District and the Cal-Pac Conference Boards, and now I am serving as President of our local UWF organization at San Dieguito UMC in Encinitas. It is a wonderful organization for women of all faiths to join together in fellowship for the support of women, children, and youth in mission here and around the world.

I remind everyone that the Book of Discipline states that every church shall have a unit of UWF, and that the pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the leadership team. I heartily agree with my mother who said, "I am enthusiastic about United Women in Faith because it's the best way I know to demonstrate God's love." Amen!

Robert N. Mansfield, Jr.

Robert Nawahine Mansfield Jr. aka Lopaka, is a member of Wesley United Methodist Church, Honolulu.

Mansfield is the name of his paternal grandfather who allegedly came from Germany. George Mansfield died a decade before Robert was born; leaving absolutely no impression of his culture or evidence of his life.

In a remote village on the island of Hawaii, his family resided with his maternal grandparents wherein the indigenous language was prevalent and was imbued with their sense of community and family through their eyes and their sensibilities. Further, they worshipped with a faith community that used only that language and sensibilities of that language. His grandparents presence in his childhood universe was huge.

Better job opportunities was the reason his parents moved to the island of O'ahu in 1954.

Family life was not the same. Worship on O'ahu was no longer a family agenda item. In 1959 or 1960 when he was in the 9th or 10th grade and overwhelmed by teenage issues and a corroding family situation, he discovered a radio broadcast worship service one Sunday. That sermon delivered by Reverend Frank E. Butterworth captured his attention and his heart. Tuning in to that station at that time every Sunday became a weekly agenda item.

And then one Sunday, he invited all to come to the table on Maundy Thursday. "Maundy Thursday, what does that mean?" Robert mentioned the broadcast to one of his high school teachers who subsequently arranged for someone at the church to meet me on Maundy Thursday.

When he arrived, there was an elderly woman who greeted him by name and escorted him in. That was the First Methodist Church of Honolulu in 1960. He was embraced by the elders as well as a bustling Methodist Youth Fellowship and Young Adult Fellowship.

Robert has since moved his membership several times between Hawaii, California, and Idaho; serving in several lay capacities.

Robert N. Mansfield, Jr.

In the late 1960's he was employed by the Hawaii District as a youth coordinator attached to Aldersgate Methodist Church in Honolulu to focus on serving the neighboring community of Mayor Wright Housing.

He retired from a career in hotel management in 2009.

Currently he is a member of the CALPAC AOR task force in the Hawaii District. And recently he has been accepted as a member of the Native American Inter-Tribal Caucus.

Rev. Alan Mark

I was baptized Episcopalian, confirmed Presbyterian and ordained United Methodist. By my baptism I was called to be Christian, in my confirmation I was shaped and prepared for ministry, and by my ordination I was charged to live out my call. With the trust of Bishops, dedicated and supportive members, and love of family I was privileged to live out my call after the ways of Christ.

During my appointments I served on our Hawaii District and Conference Boards of Ordained Ministry, Discipleship, Church and Society, Council on Ministries, Building, Planning and Strategy, and Wesley Foundation.

The pastorate was the most fulfilling and memorable, from the care and ministry to our church members and to a wider parish. Early beginnings of our Alzheimer's Respite Care that provided relief for families of elderly with special needs, led to responding to other growing needs of an aging society. Families needing home care gave impetus to the training and certifying of our church members in the Certified Nurse Aides Program. With a cadre of licensed caregivers and the opportunity for gainful employment, came the creation of the non-profit Kilohana Angels, that served a larger community. The need to have loved ones "age in place" led to the planning and building of our Senior Enrichment Center, an adult day care center that welcomed elders and created a unique bridge with our preschool. Ongoing care for our frail elderly necessitated advocacy and legislation for education, services and funding for Long Term Care.

With other pressing issues in our community, Kilohana was a co-founder of FACE (Faith Action for Community Equity), a faith-based organization of 25 churches and temples that worked to better the quality of life for our island community. For nearly two decades we advocated and organized around issues affecting our own members and community. It is noteworthy that we were members of a national network of community organizations and were fortunate to have been trained by its founder and director, who happened to have also trained a young organizer by the name of Barack Obama.

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Rev. Alan Mark

With this backdrop we made great strides toward our mission, among the most notable being: the demand for attention to the issues of Drugs and Public Safety on our streets and in our neighborhoods that led to quarterly meetings with the Police Chief and precinct commanders; working with residents and authorities of Hawaii Public Housing to make improvements and renovations for three major aging public housing developments; fighting for three years for Affordable Housing to preserve a mixed income housing complex in Honolulu from being converted into luxury apartments that resulted in the State maintaining its affordability; partnering with EAH (Ecumenical Association Housing) and notable leaders on affordable housing to increase the stock of affordable housing in the State; supporting healthcare and hotel workers (UNITE HERE Local 5) to fight for better working conditions and fair wages (that involved our sitting Bishop on key actions); working with the State administration to guide passage of a bill to establish a timetable to incrementally increase salaries towards a Living Wage; working on the ACA (Affordable Care Act) and becoming an exchange for vulnerable families who had inadequate or nonexistent health care.

Among the opportunities to be in ministry was our annual engagement on Molokai with Kalaupapa (the Hansen's Disease community). For one week out of the year for 30 years with a mission team, we were grateful to work and be in community with the residents who once suffered from the disease of leprosy. We were privileged to walk the hallowed grounds, humbled by their presence as we broke bread and "talked story," stories of the dreaded disease, the rejection, deprivation and isolation, and yet stories of faith, courage, perseverance and grace.

Upon every departure I felt more grounded and renewed in Jesus' call to love and care for the least of God's children. And that I am my brother's keeper.

Kara Mark

Alan and Kara have been partners in ministry for 50 years. Their journeys of faithful commitment and service have been complementary as they began together at churches in Kahaluu and Waimanalo, then served Waianae and Kilohana UMC in East Honolulu.

Kara has been a lifelong educator in the classroom, in school administration and as a specialist in program administration, which was a natural connection to Christian Education programs and planning in the church. Before nomenclature changed, she served as Hawaii District Director of Christian Education, and then as Conference Chairperson of Christian Education.

Among other roles for the Hawaii District, she has served on the Council on Ministries, Hawaii United Methodist Union, and on the Personnel and Leadership Committees.

Growing up at Harris UMC in Honolulu, Kara was blessed with so many significant memories and friends there and then in subsequent churches that she and Alan have served. From learning to skateboard as a teen camper to being a Camp Counselor at Camp Kailani, hiking across the then sleeping Kilauea Iki volcano on an Outdoor Ministries intergenerational hiking experience, cleaning windows at Siloama Church at Kalaupapa... opportunities to grow have been unique and priceless.

By far, the most lasting, nurturing and rewarding service opportunities have been as part of United Women in Faith. Her roots go back to the involvement of her mother, notably as the Hawaii Mission and District Treasurer of the Women's Society of Christian Service and United Methodist Women.

By virtue of her elected position on the UMW District Leadership Team, Kara was introduced to Susannah Wesley Community Center, the UMW National Mission Institution, where she served on the Board for over 30 years. She was privileged to be its President during the time of significant renovation and expansion. At the building dedication, she pointed out the noteworthy collaboration between the City and State that recognized the effective longevity of the ministry and mission of SWCC and presented a framed classic photo from 1899 of the original building structure and participants to the Mayor and Governor.

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Kara Mark

Kara has served many roles in the women's organization, more recently as Hawaii District President, and has come full circle from her first elected position as Hawaii District Vice President in 1987 to currently serving as Vice President of the Conference UWFaith Leadership Team. The women she has met over the years across lunch tables, in retreat bunk beds, in planning sessions on zoom, in phone conversations, in working shoulder to shoulder on mission projects packing soup ingredients, UMCOR kits, diapers and food boxes, in quiet moments of reflection, in interactive study sessions and in joyful celebrations... the admiration and appreciation for this Sisterhood of Grace continues to impact her growth.

At the heart of gratitude and grace is the blessing of family. Alan and Kara are thankful for the shared ministry that extends to their three daughters, Allison, Lauren and Kristen, and six thriving grandchildren. In their roles as Pastor of Faith UMC in Torrance, Grants Administrator for the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, and Complex Supervisor in the City Department of Parks and Recreation, respectively, they each have the heart of service in their leadership roles. Being surrounded by family, friends and the church community is the warmest and most wonderful affirmation of God's love. To be so honored in recognition is unexpected and truly humbling. We give God thanks for walking with us as we continue to grow in love and service.

To God, be the glory. Amen.

Leah Gallardo Switzer

I was born in Dallas, Texas, to Rev. Sylvester Gallardo, who had just earned his Master of Divinity from SMU, and Ana Maria Flores, who dedicated me to Christ before I was born. After my birth, I was baptized at the Rio Grande Conference Session, where Dr. Roy Barton, pastors and others in attendance promised to support me in my Christian faith. Dr. Barton kept that promise and later became my mentor when I joined the Editorial Board of *el Intérprete*. It truly takes a church to raise a child.

After taking confirmation classes, I chose to follow Jesus at age 11 at Adams Street United Methodist Church, which my dad had just started. That day, I truly felt floods of joy fill my heart. Soon after, I started piano lessons and became the church pianist. Every church my father led in Texas and California could count on having a pianist, and my mother would always start a kindergarten. We were the three Gallardos. In 2017, I visited Bethel United Methodist Church in San Angelo, Texas, and saw Frances, whose wedding I had played for, and the same piano I played as a teenager. Seeing both brought back many emotions.

California was a new beginning for me. After moving to San Fernando, I joined the Hispanic Youth Council led by Priscilla Baca. Over the years, I took on many roles at my local church, including serving on the Board of Trustees. At the district level, I served as Worship Director and Communications Director. At the Conference level, I was a member of the Conference Council of Ministries, Conference Committee on Communications, and the Spanglish Committee. I also spoke at one of the Spanglish camps. In 2008, I was elected as a Jurisdictional Delegate along with Ana-Haydee Urda. It was the first time two Latinas were elected. Today, I serve as co-chair of the Abolition Strategy Task Force, chair the North District Hispanic Committee, and a member of the Hispanic Conference Committee. I also recently taught the lay ministry course "Leading Public Prayer" in Spanish.

While I was studying for a Master's Degree in Journalism at USC in 1982, I was appointed to the Junta (an Advisory Board to the General Commission of Communications) and served on the Editorial Board of *el Intérprete* magazine (Spanish version of the Interpreter) for eight years. I was also the first Latina to be awarded the Stoddy-West Fellowship from UM Com.

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Leah Gallardo Switzer

After graduating from USC, I was the Communications Director at United Way of Los Angeles, later became a public relations consultant, and also taught anthropology at Ventura College and Westmont College. In 1993, I became the director of the homeless ministry called The Lord's Lighthouse at Hollywood Presbyterian church which won the World Vision National Mustard Seed Award in 1995 for uplifting a marginalized community. My experience there had a great impact in my life. But In 1997, I left the ministry because I felt God wanted me to serve elsewhere. But where?

When Steve Horswill-Johnston went to work at UMCOM in 1997, God opened the door for me to take over his position. I spent 14 wonderful years at the Media Center holding workshops, writing articles for Circuit West and the United Methodist reporter, holding Media nights featuring Buddy Ebsen and Ken Wales, producer of the movie Amazing Grace, who introduced to the plight of modern-day slavery. This inspired me to start the Cal-Pac Abolition Task Force in 2007 to educate the churches about the evils of human trafficking. Tony Flores an original member of the task force is still a member at age 97. I also received a M.A. in Theology from Fuller Seminary in 2012.

I married Greg Switzer in 2000 at Magnolia Park UMC. Greg, a former high school math teacher and track and field coach, loves playing Scrabble, and knows the Bible better than I do—qualities I always hoped for in a husband. In December 2007, we welcomed our three children: a daughter, Peter and Alex Sylvester Switzer. In 2012, Senator Adam Schiff presented us with the Angels Adoption Award in Washington, D.C., for our work with foster children and for encouraging others to adopt. I am especially grateful to Rev. Garth Gilliam, who encouraged Greg and me to attend Child Share, which began our journey to parenthood. We became parents because of his encouragement. I became active in the Verdugo Council of the Boy Scouts, and my son, Alex Sylvester, became an Eagle Scout. He is now the videographer at Van Nuys UMC.

I want to thank Bob Arvizu for inviting me in 2011 to join the Board of Directors of Spanish American Institute (SAI) , which gives scholarships to community college students and United Methodist Hispanic students. Now, we also provide scholarships to foster youth at Mission College and to students at Kid City. My dream of raising funds to help students go to college has come true.

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Leah Gallardo Switzer

Currently, I am the preacher at Van Nuys UMC, a multicultural and intergenerational church where, on Pentecost Sunday, our service included eight different languages, with all ages joining in. We reach out to our community through programs like our Bible Music Academy, ESL classes, Zoom Bible studies, and Bingo Nights. Each year, we also host the SAI concert fundraiser. Our church also believes it is important to support young adults, youth, and children, just as I was supported. Our treasurer, choir director, and Church Council Chair are all young adults who are eager to serve. I am grateful to the Hispanic North District Committee and the United Methodist Foundation for helping us launch new programs and Rev. Wang and the SPRC Committee for hiring me.

On my fireplace mantle, I keep my first Bible, my first hymn book, praying hands, my father's dissertation on John Wesley, a lighthouse, a SAI Piggy, Fair Trade Chocolate, and a painting of La Plaza UMC from Bishop Swenson. Each of these items tells a story from my life. The painting especially reminds me of my deep roots in this conference, which go back over a hundred years. It marks a turning point for my family. Everything changed when, in 1921, Rev. Eucario Sein's son invited my eleven-year-old father to church. Soon after, my father chose to follow Jesus. His decision inspired his mother and siblings, and our family to become Christians. Because of that legacy, and inspired by Jesus' words, 'Come, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men' (Matt 4:19), I want to keep sharing that invitation. I often think about those who, like my dad once did, are waiting to be invited and changed by following Jesus. Who is waiting for me to invite them?

Now, I will add the Bishop's Award to my mantel as a reminder to keep serving the Lord with zeal and to continue making disciples. Thank you, Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank, and everyone who has walked with me on this Christian journey. Let's keep moving forward and inviting others to join us in this adventure. You never know where the Triune God will lead us.

Suanne Ware-Diaz

Cradle Methodist, UCLA Bruin Alumna, and proud Kiowa woman

Suanne is a retired non-profit executive. She served the church and Native American communities as Associate General Secretary of The United Methodist Church in Washington DC and then as Executive Director of Cook Native American Ministries in Tempe, Arizona. Her focus is to create brave space where genuine and respectful curiosity lead to deeper engagement, understanding, and appreciation of oneself and of others. So, in retirement, she has continued to freelance as consultant and instructor on anti-racism and cross-cultural immersion workshops and experiences.

Suanne's passions are dance, art, and singing. She loves traveling, going to the gym, and simply spending time at home with her beloved husband, Luis. They are fortunate to have frequent visits with daughter, Briana, and her husband who live in Alexandria, Virginia. Sharing conversation (preferably accompanied by scrumptious eats, stinky cheese and crusty French bread) with family, friends, and folks we would like to get to know is always on the menu at their home. But, alas, she has proven to be an utter and total failure at retirement.

She is on or has recently served on the following church boards and community organizations:

- UMC Native American Inter-Tribal Caucus
- Native American UMC of Southern California, Administrative Council, Chair
- UMC Western Jurisdiction Committee on Native American Ministries
- Toward Right Relationship with Native People a Friends (Quaker) Peace Team
- "Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change," certified workshop facilitator
- Los Angeles County Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Community Round Table
- Native American Caucus of Los Angeles
- Wesley Foundation Serving UCLA – 580 Café
- Bead Society of Los Angeles
- Oyate Wookiye "For the People" - Strengthening families and youth on the Pine Ridge Reservation, SD through skateboarding, health and cultural programs
- Kuruvungna Village Springs and Cultural Center, on the campus of University High School in West Los Angeles

Suanne lives in West Los Angeles, California, on the unceded homeland of the Tongva-Gabrieleno people.

