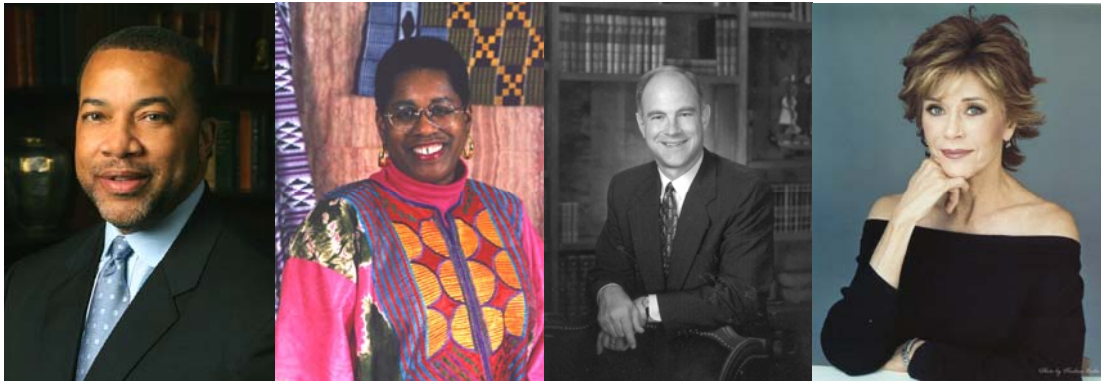




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## CHARTER DAY AND JAMES COSTEN AWARDS LAUNCH ITC TOWARD ITS 50<sup>TH</sup> YEAR CELEBRATION



(Top-l-r) Mr. Thomas Dortch, Dr. Marsha Foster Boyd, Dr. Scott Weimer, Ms. Jane Fonda  
(Bottom l-r) Mr. Thurbert Baker, Mr. Willie Gary, Ms. Robin Roberts

(January 31, 2007, Atlanta, GA) The honorees for the 2007 Charter Day and James H. Costen Awards read like a who's who of achievement across a broad spectrum of benevolent and philanthropic activity. As the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) approaches its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008, it would seem that Charter Day 2007 precludes the kickoff of anniversary events to begin in September 2007 with a more than impressive cast of awardees. Each year the institution celebrates its founding – the 1958 charter that created the world's first ecumenical academy for theological study by bringing four different Protestant denominations together and shortly afterward adding two other

denominations to make it one of the most unique experiments in religious collaboration ever imagined. Today, 49 years and seven presidents later, the institution is soaring toward its half-century mark with all six seminaries still united in the mission and ministry of *educating women and men for Christian leadership and service in the Church and the global community.*

With over 5,000 alumni sprinkled around the globe at all levels and disciplines of ministry imaginable, ITC is gearing up to celebrate what many would have thought an impossible partnership, yet the dream of founding patriarch, Harry V. Richardson, remains a marvel of academic excellence and spiritual fortitude. Consider that ITC has trained more than 5,000 pastors and lay leaders throughout North America, Africa, Asia, Canada, the Caribbean and South America; 50% of the bishops serving in leadership in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church are graduates of ITC, and ITC has graduated five of the bishops serving the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The institution is the leading educator of African American U.S. military chaplains. Two of the seminaries under the ITC umbrella are the only seminaries of their denominations – Phillips School of Theology, the Christian Methodist Episcopal affiliate at ITC, and Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary, the seminary of the Church of God in Christ. These are all milestones worthy of celebration.

The Charter Day celebration broadened its view 10 years ago, during the tenure of its fifth president, the late Dr. James H. Costen, and began paying tribute to persons with exemplary performance in the community, demonstrating in their individual contributions the same penchant for extraordinary achievement as ITC and its offspring. The 2007 honorees and the areas for which they are being cited are:

Business, Mr. Thomas “Tommy” Dortch; Civic and Community Affairs, Actress Ms. Jane Fonda; Communications and Arts, ABC News Anchor, Ms. Robin Roberts; Education, ITC alumna, Dr. Marsha Foster Boyd; Government, Attorney General Thurbert Baker; and Religion, Dr. Scott Weimer.

ITC’s sixth president, Dr. Robert Michael Franklin added another category, the “*Travelin’ Shoes*” Award, which pays homage to one who gives much to the community, but often

goes unnoticed. This year that recognition goes to Mrs. Mrs. Bessie Mayfield Davis for her culinary preparation that has served hundreds of families throughout Atlanta.

Last year, Dr. Michael A. Battle, the seventh, added the President's Award, which will go to noted Attorney Willie Gary, and this year, the Trail Blazer Award, which will recognize the accomplishments of The Reverend Dr. Wyatt T. Walker. "We are extremely honored to present these accomplished individuals to Atlanta. They come to celebrate with us and allow us opportunity to show our genuine gratitude for the good they do in the world. Much like the causes and organizations to which our honorees have committed themselves to champion; ITC is also a benefactor of their friendship, resultant from their dedication to the common good and collective well-being of humankind," says President Battle.

The annual Charter Day and James H. Costen Awards begins with a Silent Auction at 6 p.m. on Friday, April 27, 2007, followed by the awards dinner at 7 p.m. at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis in downtown Atlanta. Tickets and advertisements may be purchased through the Office of Institutional Advancement at the ITC. Call Ms. Marianne Clarke, Associate Events Manager, at 404-527-7719 for details.

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