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51st Charter Day and 12th Annual Costen Awards Gala Honors Broad Band of Community Leaders



(l-r) Awardees, Pastor Donnie McClurkin, Dr. A.C.D. Vaughn and Judge Penny Brown Reynolds.

Atlanta, GA (February 9, 2009) Join the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) at their most spectacular gala affairs of the year as they pay tribute to excellence in community leadership, celebrating top social activists, pioneering leaders and ministry icons of the century like: Pastor Donnie McClurkin, Judge Glenda Hatchett, Ms. Laura Turner Seydel, and Judge Penny Brown Reynolds. The 51st Annual Charter Day and 12th Costen Award Dinner Gala recognizes these and other outstanding leaders in the community on Friday, April 24, 2009, 6 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta.

For More than 50 years the Interdenominational Theological Center has been training, influencing, and producing outstanding leaders in the local community and churches throughout the world like Judge Penny Brown Reynolds (class of 2008), who will receive the Emerging Leader Award this year. Every year the ITC celebrates its founding in 1958 that created one of the most unique --- ecumenical theological institutions in the world; bringing six different denominational seminaries together all housed under one roof, the ITC trains men and women for Christian leadership and service in the church and the global community.

The Costen Awards is named after an exceptional visionary leader and the fifth president at ITC, the late Dr. James H. Costen. Again this year, ITC will honor those who have made significant contributions to the world of business, religion, government, civic and community affairs. Under the sixth president of the ITC, Dr. Robert Michael Franklin, another category was added the "Travelin Shoes" Award which honors those who do work within the community but often get no recognition. In 2006 under the current president, Dr. Michael Battle the President's Award was instituted, and in 2008 the Emerging Leader Award. President Battle stated, "This year we are compelled to add

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another category that speaks to our institutional focus on environmental issues and strong advocacy for *green* initiatives on the ITC campus. We will present our first *TheoEcology* Award to Ms. Laura Turner Seydel, whose passion for *greening* the planet is exceptional and is making a significant difference around the state and the nation.”

The purpose of the Chartered Day and Costen Awards Ceremony is not only to give honor to whom honor is due but also to raise unrestricted funds for the ITC. In addition to corporate sponsorship, the event’s Silent Auction of celebrity gifts garner significant contributions along with donations from individuals and various businesses.

This year ITC will celebrate those who bring hope to the community, bring justice to the system, and inspiration to the soul at the 51st Annual Charter Day and 12th Costen Awards.

The 2009 award of honorees include:

- **Civic and Community Service** - Judge Glenda Hatchett, known for her revolutionary youth interventions in the court room on her syndicated television series **Judge Hatchett**,
- **Travelin’ Shoes** – Mrs. Pearl Hollis a dedicated member of Ebenezer Baptist Church, an active supporter of Breast Cancer efforts, hospital volunteer, and real estate entrepreneur,
- **Arts and Entertainment** – Pastor Donnie McClurkin, gospel music legend, and pastor of the rapidly growing and ethnically-diverse Perfecting Faith Church located in Freeport, New York,
- **Religion** – Rev. Aaron L. Parker, Ph.D. is a pastor, preacher, teacher, and lecturer and has led his congregation to establishing more than 35 outreach ministries. Dr. Parker believes that the key to understanding and practicing the gospel is centered on love and service,
- **Government** – Senator Kasim Reed is the youngest Democratic State Senator; served as campaign manager for Mayor Shirley Franklin and his civic leadership and service have earned him national recognition,
- **Emerging Leader** – Judge Penny Brown Reynolds is an ITC graduate and family court judge with a syndicated television show dealing with family cases, providing counsel that draws from her personal experiences growing up in New Orleans, Louisiana,
- **TheoEcology “Green” Award** – Mrs. Laura Turner Seydel is the daughter of CNN founder Ted Turner, she grew up taking an active role in eco-issues from leading environmental voting initiatives to finding new ways to protect the Chattahoochee River. Seydel serves as an inspiration to others seeking to make a difference,

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- **President's Award** – Rev. A.C.D. Vaughn is the Senior Pastor of the historic Sharon Baptist Church in Baltimore, MD. His outstanding service and innovative outreach programs to the church and humanity have earned him national recognition, and
- **Business** – Mr. Willie Watkins, proprietor of Willie A. Watkins Funeral Home, Inc. providing 25 years of innovative funeral service has distinguished himself as an entrepreneur with the guiding principle expressed in his motto “Where the Name is Service.”

The 51st Annual Charter Day and 12th Annual James H. Costen Awards Gala begins with a Silent Auction and Reception at 6 p.m., followed by an awards dinner at 7 p.m., Friday, April 24, 2009, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta, GA. For additional information, contact the ITC Office of External Affairs at 404-527-7718.

THE INTERDENOMINATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CENTER:

The Interdenominational Theological center was chartered in 1958 as a professional graduate school of theology specializing in the education of men and women for ministry and service to the church and community around the globe. The ITC is a consortium of six different denominational constituent seminaries and two affiliate fellowships; Morehouse School of Religion (Baptist Affiliate), Gammon Theological (United Methodist Affiliate), Turner Theological Seminary (African Methodist Episcopal), Phillips School of Theology (Christian Methodist), Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (Presbyterian Affiliate) and Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary (Church of God in Christ Affiliate). Richardson Ecumenical Fellowship is comprised of several other denominations beyond the six affiliate schools and other students also attend the Lutheran Center at ITC.

To find out more about the programs of study offered, please visit www.itc.edu or call 404.527.7792.

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