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Top row l-r: Dr. Cameron Alexander, Bishop DeWitt Burton, Dr. Beverly Hall, Mr. Bill Bolling
Bottom row l-r: Mrs. Na'Taki Osborne Jelks, Rev. Connie "CJ" Jackson, Rev. Baxter Wynn, Elder Cal Merrell.

EIGHT FAITH AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO RECEIVE COSTEN AWARDS DURING "TRIBUTE TO EXCELLENCE"

February 1, 2010, Atlanta, GA - The annual observance of the founding of the ecumenical consortium of six different seminaries chartered as The Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in 1958, 52 years ago, will continue that tradition on Friday, March 26, 2010. During the Charter Day and James H. Costen Awards Dinner at 6 p.m., Hyatt Regency Atlanta, eight persons whose professional contributions to the local and national community have been found worthy of the "Tribute to Excellence" will be honored.

The 2010 honorees in their respective categories are: **Religion**, ITC alumnus, Rev. Dr. Cameron Madison Alexander, pastor of Antioch Baptist Church North and for 20 years president of the General Missionary Baptist Convention; **Education**, Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Beverly L. Hall; **Emerging Leader**, ITC alumna, Rev. Connie Jackson, President of J. Trinity Communications and former Executive Director of City of Hope Ministries, an outreach organization of the Ray of Hope Christian Church, Decatur, GA; **TheoEcology**, Mrs. Na'Taki Osborne-Jelks, National Wildlife Federation Manager of Sustainability; **Trailblazer**, Rev. Dr. Baxter Wynn, Minister of Pastoral Care and Community Relations, First

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Baptist Church, Greenville, SC and author of “Two Sons of Atlanta”-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and former Georgia Governor Lester G. Maddox; *Inspiration*, Elder Cal Merrell, known as “The Happy Preacher”; *Lifetime Service Award*, Bishop DeWitt A. Burton, of the Church of God in Christ; and, *The Travelin’ Shoes Award*, Mr. Bill Bolling, Founder and CEO of The Atlanta Community Food Bank.

The original Charter Day Dinner, held in the early years on the ITC campus, paid homage to the founders of the seminary and celebrated the creation of an ecumenical theological framework for training African American clergy that had been attempted, but never achieved until 1958 when Dr. Harry V. Richardson fostered partnerships among four struggling religion departments at four historically Black colleges, to create the consortium. The awards ceremony was added to the Founders’ Day observance 13 years ago, when then President Robert Franklin established the ITC Associates as a volunteer group to support the advancement office in its fundraising efforts and expanded the celebration to pay tribute to Dr. James H. Costen for his excellent leadership of the ITC and in the Church worldwide. Every year since, the committee, using Dr. Costen as the barometer for excellence to which others aspire, has selected persons to receive the Costen Award. Recipients now total more than 75 women and men, clergy, educators, entrepreneurs, civic and community servants, contributors to the arts and entertainment industry, and most recently contributors to the environment and to the spiritual uplift of humankind.

The Charter Day Planning Committee, ably chaired by Mr. George Andrews, President of Capital City Bank and Trust has garnered the support of alumni, students, and friends of ITC to again gather and celebrate ITC’s history and legacy of excellence in the Church on March 26, 2010. The committee invites the community to participate as well.

For more information about the 53rd Charter Day and 13th James H. Costen Awards Dinner, go to www.itc.edu or call 404-527-7718.