



## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

BRIDGES has served the Greater Cincinnati community since its founding in 1944 as a regional office of The National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ). Our work began with a focus on interfaith dialogue, bringing together individuals of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish traditions to discuss their differences and commonalities in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Over the course of our 60+-year history, we have, in response to the changing social dynamics of society, gone from an interfaith agenda to one that successively added equal rights and inclusion on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity (i.e. Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Middle Eastern), other religions, (i.e. Hindu, Baha'i, Islam), physical/mental abilities, sexual orientation and economic status.

Each new cause was prompted by a group's desire to be included in mainstream society and its appeal to BRIDGES for help in removing the unjust barriers to inclusion. Today BRIDGES is governed by a very engaged and diverse group of prominent civic leaders and is a founding member of the new National Federation for Just Communities, a national organization that promotes the sharing of programs and best practices among its 20 members around the country.

1944 Cincinnati chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews opens its office in the Keith Building on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Baptist minister Rev. Warren C. Taylor, is its first executive director. William A.A. Castellini, Herbert R. Bloch and Daniel Laurence are founding co-chairs. Vassar graduate, Alice Frieder (later Mrs. Harris K. Weston), joins the staff as its first program director in 1946.

1947 Attorney John W. Keefe succeeds Rev. Taylor as executive director. Board members include Robert N. Gorman, William T. Earls, Philip M. Meyers, J. Thomas Grace, Jeffrey L. Lazarus, Robert P. Goldman, Walter S. Schmidt, Dorothy Dolbey, Hon. Chase M. Davies, C.R. Beirne, William N. Lovelace, Harris K. Weston, Raymond Walters, Leonard M. Sive and Ruth Ware.

Numerous promotional and educational activities are sponsored in observance of "Brotherhood Week" and teams of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish clergy, laity and teens address community groups on the importance of religious tolerance.

1949 Businessman Malcolm B. Chandler succeeds Mr. Keefe as executive director.

- 1951 First annual testimonial dinner is held with Charles Sawyer, former U.S. Secretary of Commerce under Truman, as the honoree and Procter & Gamble chairman, Richard R. Deupree, as dinner chair.
- Mayor Albert D. Cash is appointed first honorary chair of "Brotherhood Week".
- 1958 Cincinnati Charles P. Taft serves as national vice chair of "Brotherhood Week" (with President Eisenhower serving as honorary chair.)
- 1959 NCCJ conducts human relations training for area school teachers during summer session held at the University of Cincinnati to prepare them to be successful in racially integrated classrooms.
- 1965 NCCJ begins a 7-year program of establishing and maintaining Police-Community Relations Councils in each of Cincinnati's seven police districts.
- 1967 In the aftermath of local racial disturbances WKRC-TV/Taft Broadcasting Company pilots "Dialogue", featuring as panelists the Rev. Dr. Emerson S. Colaw, Rev. Edward B. Brueggeman, S.J., Rev. Dr. Tecumseh X. Graham, Rabbi Albert Goldman and Rev. Dr. L. Venchael Booth. This award-winning program has a record tenure of airing without interruption on Channel 12 for the next 25 years.
- 1968 To improve the very strained police-youth relations, NCCJ sponsors its first Police & Youth "Live-In" program of inner city youth and police officers. It is still a premiere program of BRIDGES today.
- 1970 Religious educator Donald F. Flemer succeeds Mr. Chandler as executive director. Walter E. Beckjord, Joseph B. Reynolds and Harris K. Weston are co-chairs of the board.
- In cooperation with the Cincinnati Police Division, NCCJ establishes the Police/Clergy Crisis Intervention Response Team.
- The chapter sponsors its first community reception in observance of February's "Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week" at which it presents service awards and a Mayor's proclamation in this annual re-affirmation of the community's commitment to unity and intergroup harmony.
- 1973 In response to increased interest in student rights and responsibilities, the innovative and nationally acclaimed "Student Ombudsman Apprenticeship" program is piloted at Withrow High school, expanding shortly thereafter to Woodward and Aiken high schools.
- 1974 NCCJ is a co-founder of Ecumedia, a group of local religious communicators. Laurens P. Cotter, William N. Liggett and Philip G. Steiner are the co-chairs of NCCJ's board.

- 1977 Referred to as the “cradle of directors” the Cincinnati chapter produces four executive directors of other NCCJ chapters who all begin their careers in Cincinnati: Frank Magrath (Miami), Dick Rand (Boston), John Arey (Milwaukee) and Chip Harrod (Louisville).
- 1979 After years of development by the Cincinnati chapter, Dayton NCCJ hires its first executive director, retired Air Force chaplain, Col. Richard D. Miller and begins to operate independently.
- 1984 Attorney Robert “Chip” Harrod succeeds Mr. Flemer as executive director. Paul C. Ahern, Dr. Lawrence C. Hawkins and Joyce J. Salinger are co-chairs of the board.
- 1985 NCCJ begins the Metropolitan Youth Roundtable program for area high school students which launches with representation from 37 area public, private and parochial high schools.
- 1986 NCCJ extends services to Northern Kentucky. Dr. Leon E. Boothe, William T. Robinson III and Fran K. Carlisle become the first Northern Kentuckians elected to the NCCJ Board of Directors.
- NCCJ publishes the first issue of its commentary, *AT ISSUE*, with a piece devoted to anti-Asian bigotry entitled “Racism of a Different Color” authored by Charleston C.K. Wang and Dean Goto.
- 1988 On December 28<sup>th</sup> NCCJ sponsors the historic “Interfaith Celebration of Cincinnati’s Bicentennial” at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral; the printed program from that service is enclosed inside the 2088 Tri-Centennial time capsule. David Lazarus, Joan J. Portman and Thomas E. Westerfield are co-chairs of the board.
- 1989 NCCJ develops “C.O.A.C.H.” cultural diversity program for area workforce managers.
- 1991 NCCJ establishes its first volunteer association, “Cincinnati’s Future.”
- 1992 NCCJ welcomes its first Muslim to the board, Dr. Baher S. Foad. Co-chairs are Robert H. Castellini, Mona B. Kerstine and Calvin H. Conliffe.
- In April, NCCJ’s National Executive Board votes to change the organization’s promotional name to “The National Conference” in order to present a public image that is more inclusive and inviting of groups other than Christians and Jews. (The corporate name is NOT changed and remains “National Conference of Christians and Jews, Inc.”)
- 1993 Major League Baseball selects NCCJ to conduct cultural diversity training for The Cincinnati Reds Inc. and its owner Marge Schott.

The chapter sponsors its first “Holy Strokes” golf tournament as a fundraiser for its interfaith work. With the slogan “Where prayer is par for the course” the tournament is held at the Triple Crown Country Club and chaired by Fran Carlisle.

- 1994 On the occasion of the local NCCJ’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary it announces its intention to build a national museum in Cincinnati dedicated to the Underground Railroad. Chip Harrod conceives the idea and serves as founding president of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, which opens its doors to the public in 2004. NCCJ board members playing leadership roles are Dr. Lawrence C. Hawkins, Harry Whipple, Ed Rigaud, Myron Dale, Francie Hiltz, Judge Nathaniel Jones, Dan Hoffheimer, Bob Castellini and Calvin Conliffe.
- 1995 To begin the process of healing a community that is fractured by a series of divisive social controversies, and to provide a sequel to Episcopal Bishop Herbert Thompson, Jr.’s Summit on Racism, NCCJ partners with Cinergy Corp (now Duke Energy) to establish a large-scale goodwill initiative called “CommUNITY: Different People...Common Ground.” The project featured hundreds of small group dialogues and the nationally acclaimed “Anytown, U.S.A.” youth program.
- 1997 NCCJ welcomes the first member of the Greek Orthodox faith to the board with the election of George L. Strike.
- 1998 NCCJ National Board votes to officially change the organization’s name to “The National Conference for Community and Justice” to honor the founding acronym (NCCJ) and to be more inclusive of and responsive to the increasing religious and cultural diversity of the country.
- 1999 Greater Cincinnati is one of 10 regions to pilot “Walk As One” walk-a-thon which brings people together in support NCCJ programs. Since 2000, Cincinnati’s multi-cultural Walk has been the number one walk in the country; co-sponsor is The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. Local GE Aviation has been the top-ranked corporate team nationally for over a decade.

The Greater Cincinnati Region is recognized for its outstanding work as the recipient of the NCCJ President’s Pursuit of Excellence Award at the national NCCJ leadership conference.

- 2001 In the immediate aftermath of civil unrest, NCCJ from behind the scenes leads a team of Cincinnati police officers through an internal assessment of the Cincinnati Police Department’s community relations that results in the eventual adoption and implementation of police-community reforms.

Greater Cincinnati is again recognized at NCCJ’s national leadership conference, receiving the Glen Poling Award for Excellence in Programming.

- 2003 NCCJ elects the first Muslim as board chair, Dr. Inayat K. Malik.

2004 In recognition of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Greater Cincinnati Region launches the “Be The Change” campaign, encouraging every member of the community to work for positive social change.

Under the direction of board members Dr. Mitchel Livingston and Marc Chini, the Board articulates and officially adopts a set of core values to guide the organization: Responsibility, Integrity, Learning, Justice, Progress, Community and Celebration.

The local NCCJ is presented the Jacqueline G. Wexler Award for Advocacy for leading the local effort to repeal the City of Cincinnati’s anti-gay charter amendment (Article XII) at the NCCJ national organization’s leadership conference held in Cincinnati.

2005 The local NCCJ is incorporated as an independent non-profit organization under the name of the National Conference for Community and Justice of Greater Cincinnati and becomes an affiliate member of the national organization.

Tenth anniversary of Anytown USA Youth Leadership Institute (now known as JUST Community)

The first Regional Director, Cincinnati’s own Chip Harrod, is named NCCJ National President, leading the organization through a major restructuring.

2006 NCCJ releases the first *Greater Cincinnati Human Relations Indicator Survey* which measures the relations among six social groups in the region.

Cincinnati NCCJ board unanimously makes the business decision to disaffiliate from NCCJ, ending a 62-year relationship. Moving forward with the theme of “Same people, Same purpose, Same programs” and under the leadership of Dr. Inayat Malik and Dr. Mitchel Livingston, Cincinnati is a key player in the creation of a new national organization, The National Federation for Just Communities, which the leading, former NCCJ chapters join. Dr. Malik is elected inaugural chair of the NFJC.

2007 NCCJ of Greater Cincinnati is publicly re-launched as BRIDGES for a Just Community with a new mission statement (“Bringing people together to achieve inclusion, equity and justice for all”) and brand. Board chair is Dr. Mitchel D. Livingston and vice chairs are Anne Zaring and Jerry Teller.

Public Allies Cincinnati, an AmeriCorps program, is acquired by BRIDGES.