



THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR COMMUNITY AND JUSTICE
OF GREATER CINCINNATI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR COMMUNITY AND JUSTICE ANNOUNCES
HONOREES FOR ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER**

56th Annual Dinner To Be Held May 25, 2006

CINCINNATI, OH – May 2, 2006 – The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) announces five honorees to be recognized for distinguished service at the 56th Annual Awards Dinner on Thursday, May 25, 2006, at the Hyatt Regency Cincinnati. This year's honorees are Fran & Wayne Carlisle, Michael Fisher, the Honorable William A. McClain and Merri Gaither Smith. James E. Schwab, Cincinnati Market President of U.S. Bank, is dinner chair for the event.

Fran Carlisle was one of the first residents from Northern Kentucky elected to serve on the local NCCJ board, joining the board in 1986 and continuing to serve as an Emeritus NCCJ Board member today. She was named "Woman of the Year" in 1996 by The Cincinnati Enquirer. Wayne Carlisle, a leader in the construction industry, serves as a board member of numerous, business, civic and charitable organizations, including the Northern Kentucky Convention Center Corporation Board and the Dan Beard Council. Mr. Carlisle was responsible for making the World Peace Bell located in Newport, Kentucky a reality and played a major part in locating the Aquarium in Newport. They reside in Northern Kentucky.

Michael Fisher, former president and CEO of the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, led the organization through a series of initiatives geared toward making the region more globally competitive and drawing the community together. Under Mr. Fisher's management, the Chamber introduced dual membership relationships with the African-American Chamber, the Hispanic Chamber and other chambers. In an effort to grow the capacity and size of existing minority-owned firms, he helped to create the Minority Business Accelerator to increase employment, capital investment and wealth for these firms and the region as a whole. He also serves on numerous philanthropic and civic board, including Downtown Cincinnati, Inc. and the Cincinnati Business Committee. He resides in Amberley Village.

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The Honorable William A. McClain, retired judge of both the Common Pleas Court and Municipal Court of Hamilton County, has a long history of public service. In addition to serving as a judge, Mr. McClain has been City Solicitor for the City of Cincinnati, law professor at both the University of Cincinnati and Salmon P. Chase Law Schools and general counsel for the Cincinnati Branch of the Small Business Administration. As the first black member of the Cincinnati Lawyers Club in 1947, Mr. McClain has spent his career as a champion for human relations issues and advancement for African-American lawyers. He resides in Hyde Park.

Merri Gaither Smith began her teaching career with Cincinnati Public Schools in 1960, rising to administrative executive assistant to the first African-American Superintendent, Dr. Lee Etta Powell. Following her retirement, she co-founded Advocates for Youth Education, Inc., which awards scholarships to deserving Greater Cincinnati students, and continues to devote her energies to Greater Cincinnati youth full-time. She has served on a variety of boards, including the Greater Cincinnati Foundation. Receiving numerous awards recognizing her outstanding community service, Mrs. Smith was also honored as a Cincinnati Enquirer Woman of the Year. She resides in East Walnut Hills.

All five local citizens will be recognized at the NCCJ event for making significant contributions to the improvement of human relations in the Greater Cincinnati community – brief video segments highlighting the achievements of each of the honorees will be available on **CETconnect.org**. The awards dinner serves as NCCJ's major annual fundraiser – the event will be held on May 25, 2006 at the Hyatt Regency Cincinnati, with a reception and silent auction starting at 5:30 p.m. For more information about the awards dinner or to purchase tickets, please call Nina Jackson at NCCJ at 381-4660.

About the National Conference for Community and Justice

The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism. NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education. NCCJ is a non-partisan organization that works with individuals and organizations to facilitate institutional changes through its programs, advocacy and research. NCCJ has served the Greater Cincinnati community since 1944 and this past year became an independent affiliate of the national organization. For more information, go to www.nccjcincinnati.org.

About CETconnect.org

NCCJ is proud to be a partner in **CETconnect.org**, working with CET, Greater Cincinnati's public television station, to connect our community to interviews, lectures, activities, special events and other unique presentations and programs. CETconnect.org is the first community public media website. Experience it yourself at **CETconnect.org**.

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