

Rev. Mark Hernandez receives the Living Legend award from Congressman

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A Unificationist man from Dallas was recently recognized by a local non-profit organization for his outstanding contributions to the lives of others and commitment to human progress. Rev. Mark Hernandez was the recipient of the Living Legend award on June 1 by Verna's H.E.L.P. Foundation (Helping Everyone Live Positive). The nonprofit, founded and directed by Verna Thomas-Melton, selected Rev. Hernandez because of his tireless efforts toward cultivating interfaith unity and dialogue.

"God lit a fire in my heart so many years ago," said Rev. Hernandez, as he recounted how his marriage was also a symbol of interfaith and cross-cultural healing. He shared about his passionate dedication toward peace and interfaith exchange at the Royal Oaks Country Club, where the foundation held its annual fundraising event and honored a handful of other Living Legend recipients. Rev. Hernandez described his personal story of growing up in Dallas; being a product of the public school system; and gratefully acknowledged the many mentors, teachers, and coaches that guided him along his journey. "It's important for all people to experience God's love and to be certain of God's hand in their lives," he said.

Established in 1985, Verna's H.E.L.P. Foundation has been dedicated to helping youth and disadvantaged young adults through educational programs, job fairs, legal clinics, and scholarships. The nonprofit has also brought forth initiatives aimed to fight crime and promote peace in Dallas, including "No Crime Day," which has now evolved into the annual National Night Out community-police awareness event. Living Legend recipients included members of the city government, local business leaders, educators, musicians, and clergy. Rev. Hernandez encouraged all of them to continue their crucial, life-changing work.

Congressman Colin Allred, representative of the 32nd Congressional District of Texas, also addressed the crowd and gave each Living Legend recipient a US Congressional Award as well.