

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

Media Release

Interchurch Center, Suite B 0245 SW Bancroft Street Portland, Oregon 97239
phone (503) 221-1054 *fax* (503) 223-7007 *Web site* www.emoregon.org

April 3, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact person: Carla Starrett-Bigg, (503) 221-1054
csbigg@emoregon.org

EMO posthumously honors Pastor Hardy with “Lifetime of Service Award”

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) will honor The Rev. Dr. W.G. Hardy, Jr., in memoriam, on May 16, 2018, at its *Benefit Dinner & Awards Celebration*. The award is presented in recognition of his lifetime of dedication and contributions to the well-being of our community.

A native of Portland, Dr. Hardy served as senior pastor of the Highland Christian Center in northeast Portland for the past 22 years. He was an ordained minister with triple standing in the Church of God in Christ, United Church of Christ and Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, and he was a third generation preacher from a family of church pastors that included his late father and grandfather.

A thoughtful teacher and a spiritual advisor to countless members of the community, he helped grow a small Highland United Church of Christ congregation into one of the city’s largest churches serving a diverse population. Under his leadership, the church initiated programs to feed and shelter the homeless, transition former prisoners into a normal life within the community, and partnered with organizations like Albina Head Start, Multnomah County, the state of Oregon’s REACH program, and the Highland African American Youth Coalition to fulfill the church’s mission of serving the community.

In 2015, the Portland City Council declared a Day of Recognition in honor of Hardy and his community service, recognizing his efforts to keep young men out of gangs, feed and support those who are homeless, and engage with people who are mentally ill, encouraging conversations in the faith community about mental illness. “I’d rather live out Christianity than preach Christianity,” Hardy said at the time.

Dr. Hardy, who inspired so many others with his dynamic sermons and lifelong service to his church and community, succumbed to a three-year battle with kidney cancer this February.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s *Benefit Dinner & Awards Celebration* is the single most important annual fundraiser for our vital ministries to the poor, the vulnerable, the hungry and the sick throughout the state of Oregon. Funds contributed by sponsors and guests enable us to serve those in need and to advocate on their behalf at the Oregon Legislature for a just, equitable and sustainable society. Each year we honor

extraordinary individuals and organizations such as Pastor Hardy whose moral vision and commitment to action have contributed profoundly to making our community a better place.

This year, the event will be held on May 16 at the Benson Hotel, 309 SW Broadway, Portland. A reception and silent auction to benefit EMO's ministries will be held from 5 to 6:30 p.m.; dinner, a live auction and the award presentations will begin at 6:30 p.m. Reservations, available at emoregon.org, are \$100 per person (festival seating) or \$2,000 per table of 10 (includes Bronze Sponsorship and reserved seating). For more information, contact Carla Starrett-Bigg at (503) 221-1054, ext. 275, or csbigg@emoregon.org.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, earth ministry, and public policy advocacy.