

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EMO awards “Two Pauls Award” posthumously to Rabbi Aryeh Hirschfield

The late Rabbi Aryeh Hirschfield will be posthumously honored with the “Two Pauls Award” on Oct. 13, 2009, at the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner. The award is presented in recognition of outstanding promotion of interfaith dialogue, service and relations.

Hirschfield received his rabbinical ordination in 1977 and later helped establish Congregation P’nai Or in 1996, a welcoming Jewish Renewal community, where he served as rabbi until his tragic death earlier this year. Hirschfield was passionately involved in interfaith dialogue for over 30 years and was an active member of the Interfaith Council of Greater Portland (ICGP). He took groups to Israel and Palestine to meet with and lend support to individuals and organizations working to bring about a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He was also an internationally-known singer, composer of Jewish liturgical music, storyteller and teacher of Jewish spirituality.

Rabbi Hirschfield died Jan. 6, 2009, in a snorkeling accident while vacationing with his family in Mexico. “Aryeh’s passing will be a devastating blow to his congregation, P’nai Or, and to our Jewish community and the interfaith community,” said Rabbi Daniel Isaak of Congregation Neveh Shalom, which hosted a memorial service attended by more than 1,000 people on Jan. 12, 2009.

David Leslie, EMO executive director, worked with Hirschfield in interfaith programs on subjects from peacemaking to poverty. “Whether you were Christian or Buddhist or Hindu, whatever your background, he was always ready to engage in a conversation,” Leslie said.

In his own words Hirschfield wrote, “I also seek to create an experience of joy, aliveness and connectedness to Judaism and, ultimately, God willing, to the sacred beyond any label or denomination.”

Hirschfield was born March 19, 1943, and grew up in the Bronx, N.Y.

The EMO Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner will be held at the Hilton Hotel, 921 SW Sixth Ave., Portland. A reception and silent auction to benefit EMO’s ministries will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m. and the dinner and award presentations will begin at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$60 per person and table sponsorships are available for \$600. For more information, call Carla Starrett-Bigg at (503) 221-1054 or csbigg@emoregon.org.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations—including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies—congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.

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