

May 2017

UCC Minister Honored For His Work in the Field of Affordable Housing



The Rev. Dr. Laverne Joseph, president, and CEO of Retirement Housing Foundation (RHF) was honored for his outstanding service to humanity by Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pa.

Joseph, who leads one of the nation's largest faith-based providers of affordable housing, is the recipient of the 2017 Ursinus College Alumni Award for Service to Humanity. Joseph is a United Church of Christ minister and a 1960 graduate of Ursinus.

The award pays tribute to someone who has greatly benefitted non-profit community institutions.

A graduate of Spring Grove High School in 1956 and Lancaster Seminary in 1964, Joseph started his work in affordable housing as the Executive director of Peace Memorial UCC's housing and health care ministries (which included a nursing home, a home health agency and, under his leadership, developed three senior housing facilities) before joining RHF in 1987.

RHF, based in Long Beach, Calif., has more than tripled in growth under Joseph's leadership. Founded in 1961 by two UCC clergypersons and a layperson, it now serves nearly 21,000 people in 191 communities in 29 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

While most RHF communities are affordable communities for low or moderate income, RHF also manages multi-level retirement communities offering independent living, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing. RHF employs more than 2,800 people.

Joseph, a board member of the UCC's Council for Health and Human Service Ministries, was honored at an on-campus awards ceremony on April 22.

"We are delighted but not surprised that Dr. Joseph would be honored in this significant way," said Michael J. Readinger, president, and CEO of CHHSM. "Laverne is a minister who has dedicated his life to ensuring that every person, every family, has a place to call home, a calling that has led to his remarkable impact on the affordable housing movement in this country. He is one of the United Church of Christ's most passionate justice advocates, and we could not be more proud of him."