

Annual
Woman of the Year
and
Champion of Justice
Awards Ceremony



November 4, 2023

La Sierra University Church

Our Mission and Goals

Association of Adventist Women

Advocate for the participation of women in all leadership roles in Seventh-day Adventist organizations, congregations, and communities around the globe.

- ◆ **Enhance** the church's effectiveness by fostering a grass roots movement to recognize women's services as leadership and allow full partnership of women in the entirety of church life
- ◆ **Promote** leadership skills among Adventist women of various ages and backgrounds
- ◆ **Establish** a network for Adventist women to inspire and support each other in leadership
- ◆ **Work amicably** with the church to create more significant opportunities for women in all levels of administration and ministry, including ordination
- ◆ **Highlight** Adventist women's contributions so their skills can be fully valued
- ◆ **Demonstrate** open and collaborative models by working in complementary ways with other church organizations

Thank You

AAW Donors

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Special Thanks

Francis Priest – Program Content
Linda Becker, PhD – Program Content
Natasha Thomas – harp Natasha Thomas
can be reached at: Info@nharp.com
Ledy Ann Patel – Program Design
Sheila Hodgkin – Flowers

To join AAW visit:
associationofadventistwomen.com

WOMAN OF THE YEAR & CHAMPION OF JUSTICE

past awardees

1984 - 2012

Visit AssociationOfAdventistWomen.com

2013	Christine P. Crosby Judith Lloyd Storjell	Lifetime Achievement Outstanding Achievement
2014	Frederica Harris Sandra Roberts	Community Life Spiritual Leadership
2016	Carolyn Slepnikoff Lacy Iris Landa Adeny Schmidt Fritz Guy Randal Wisbey	Distinguished Service Community Life Professional Life Champions of Justice Champions of Justice
2018	Durdica Garvanovic Porobija	Youth Life
2019	Carole Ferch-Johnson Linda Mendez Chris Oberg Corene Stennis Dan Jackson	Outstanding Achievement Youth Life Spiritual Leadership Community Life Champion of Justice
2020	Dynette Elaine Hart Nyslie Guerrier Juana Dina Salas Montoya Hilde Thorkildson Huru Ginger Hanks Harwood Ricardo Graham David Weigley	Community Life Community Life Spiritual Leadership Spiritual Leadership Outstanding Achievement Champion of Justice Champion of Justice
2021	Dianne Sika-Paotonu Helen Hopp Marshak Phyllis Ware Lee Charles Sandefur Henry Fordham III	Scholarship Leadership and Administration Leadership and Administration Champion of Justice Champion of Justice
2022	Sylvia Klinger Nandi Fleming Carmela Monk Crawford Margaret Solomon Verna Alva Judy Lello Randy Roberts	Outstanding Achievement Church Life Outstanding Achievement Professional Life Lifetime of Service Community Service Champion of Justice



Our AAW Team *Current Officers*

President: Nerida Taylor Bates

Secretary/Treasurer: Priscilla Walters

Director of Development: Ruth Peeters

Woman-of-the-Year Awards: Linda Wysong Becker

Communications Director: Frances Priest

Banquet Coordinator: Dana Stelian

Board: Hazel von Maack

Board: Robin Butler

Historian: Bernie Beck

Awards Ceremony Program

Harp Prelude	Natasha Thomas
Welcome	Nerida Bates, MD, PhD
Prayer	Raewyn Orlich
Musical Selection	Natasha Thomas
Speech <i>"Whose Message is It?"</i>	Olive Hemmings, PhD
Musical Selection	Raejin Lee, vocal
Awards Presentations	Linda Becker, PhD

Woman of the Year

Scholarship and Church Leadership – Drene Somasundram, PhD

Introduction by Kirsten Oster

Church Leadership – Pastor Maria Silvia Neri Castrijón

Introduction by Adly Campos

Humanitarian Leadership – Norma Nashed

Introduction by Nerida Bates, MD

Scholarship and Spiritual Leadership – Olive Hemmings, PhD

Introduction by Kendra Haloviak, PhD

Speech Women's Ordination Loren Seibold, DMin
"Where We Are and Where We are Heading"

Champion of Justice

William G. Johnsson, PhD – Posthumously

Introduction by Tim Gillespie

Loren Seibold, D.Min

Introduction by Jim Walters, PhD

Closing Remarks Nerida Bates, MD, PhD

Liturgical Reading Frances Priest

Closing Prayer Kendra Haloviak, PhD



Dr. Loren Seibold, DMin

Loren Seibold grew up on a North Dakota farm, in a multi-generational Adventist family. He attended Sheyenne River Academy and Walla Walla College, where he met Carmen, a registered nurse. They married in 1978 and began parish ministry in the Dakota Conference. He earned a Master of Divinity degree at Andrews University, and in 1986 took the pulpit of the church in Palo Alto, California, near San Francisco.

In California Loren completed a doctorate at the San Francisco Theological Seminary, a Presbyterian seminary. At the same time, Carmen had begun to explore a career change and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. When in 1999 Loren took the pastorate of a congregation in Worthington, Ohio, Carmen completed Clinical Pastoral Education there, and subsequently ministered as an ordained healthcare chaplain.

Loren works from the belief that God is gracious and good and has accordingly attempted to promote conversation about justice in the church through writing and speaking. He's written hundreds of essays on faith, church, doctrine and social issues. He's been a regular writer for *Signs of the Times*, *Ministry and other magazines*, and for ten years was a monthly columnist for *Spectrum*. In 2015 he became the editor of *Adventist Today*, which grew into another full-time job after he retired from parish ministry in 2019.

Loren's family still has their farm in North Dakota. Carmen and Loren love gardening, especially flowers. They're also devoted travelers.

Loren has not only encouraged women in ministry and leadership, he has created a safe place for conversations about this challenging issue within Adventism through his work with *Adventist Today and Spectrum*.



William G. Johnsson, PhD

William G. Johnsson died on March 11, 2023. He was a prolific author, respected scholar, and long-time editor of the *Adventist Review*. He is most remembered for his passion for truth, grace and biblical fairness, including for women pastors.

Bill, as he was known, was born in South Australia. He trained to be a chemical engineer, but an inner voice compelled him to the ministry. Following graduation from Avondale College and marrying the love of his life, Noelene (Taylor), they sailed for India in 1960. Johnsson served fifteen years teaching at Vincent Hill School and then Spicer Memorial College.

Johnsson received a master's degree in systematic theology from Andrews University; a bachelor of divinity from the University of London; and doctor of philosophy in biblical studies from Vanderbilt University.

From 1975 to 1980 Johnsson was faculty at Andrews Theological Seminary, where he became associate dean and was elected as the first president of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies.

In 1980, Johnsson joined the *Adventist Review* becoming editor for 24 years. His editorials shaped the understanding of many Adventist doctrines, especially grace. He used this position to champion women, including hiring them as writers and editors.

After "retirement," he became an ambassador for interfaith dialog with Christians and Muslims. He was one of the statesmen in "From the Heart: It's Time" video in support of women's ordination, writing strongly after his retirement for full equality of women ministers.

Johnsson authored more than 40 books, hundreds of *Adventist Review* editorials, and thousands of articles — all of them handwritten on legal pads.

He is survived by his wife, Noelene, grown children Julie, and Terry, his wife Renee, and granddaughters Madeleine and Jacqueline. He will be remembered for his endless optimism, gentle humor, and indomitable spirit. His words of love in action and the ready availability of grace will live on.

Liturgical Reading

The Commission, the Power and the Assurance,

La Comisión, el Poder y la Seguridad,

Go into all the world and proclaim the good news of the Gospel to the whole creation.

Va por todo el mundo y proclama las buenas nuevas del Evangelio a toda la creación.

"...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witness in Jerusalem," in Mexico, in Ukraine, in Africa, Australia, Europe, Asia, the Americas...and to the ends of the earth.

"...mas recibiréis poder, cuando haya venido sobre vosotros el Espíritu Santo, y me seréis testigos en Jerusalén," en México y Ucrania en África, Australia, Europa, Asia, las Américas ...y hasta lo último de la tierra.

Therefore, my beloved, stand firm, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Así que, hermanos míos amados, estad firmes y constantes, creciendo en la obra del Señor siempre, sabiendo que vuestro trabajo en el Señor no es vano."

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

Confiado de esto, que el que comenzó en vosotros la buena obra, la perfeccionará hasta el día de Jesucristo.





Liturgical Reading (continued)

In the world you face persecution. But take courage, I have conquered the world.

En el mundo tendréis aflicción; más confiad, yo he vencido al mundo.

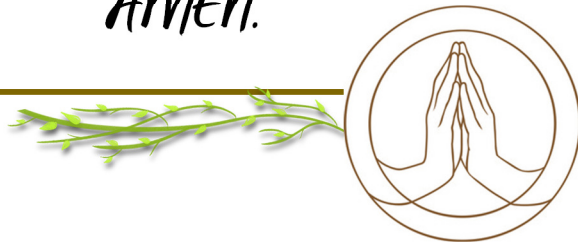
Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Por lo cual, consolaos los unos a los otros, y edificaos los unos a los otros, así como lo hacéis.

And all the attendees say:

Y todos los presentes dicen:

AMEN.



Dr. Olive Hemmings

Scholarship and Spiritual Leadership

Dr. Olive Hemmings is Chair of the Henry and Sharon Fordham Department of Religion at Washington Adventist University where she has taught for more than 20 years. She began teaching in 1982 at West Indies College (now Northern Caribbean University), when she was still a student there!

Her has a Masters is in New Testament and Biblical Languages from Andrews, studied at Fuller Theological Seminary in ethics and has a Ph. D is in Theology, Ethics and Culture from Claremont Graduate University.

She is an ordained minister of Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and pursues a yearly itinerary of preaching and teaching. She has a passion for examining texts in their rich cultural/historical contexts and how they apply to social struggles then and now. She enjoys mentoring undergraduate and graduate students and teaching New Testament, Ethics and World Religions

She is engaged in an active writing/publication ministry mainly on topics of current ethical concerns in church and society, with the prophetic origins of the gospel as foundation. Her publication *Sacred Texts and Social Conflict is a case study of the debate over women's ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church details the way sacred texts are used and abused. She is a past president of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies - a major professional society of Adventist Religion/Theology scholars.*

In 2022, Olive joined the Georgetown University ACPE chaplaincy program in order to develop pastoral/spiritual care competence and has found it to be a deeply spiritually transforming journey. She is married to Charles Kuuku Paintsil and they have three adult offsprings.

Olive's scholarship and commitment to see God's justice roll down like rain inspire us all to truly seek justice.



Norma Nashed is the Founder and President of Restore a Child, a non-profit organization dedicated to transforming the lives of orphans and destitute children around the world. By raising money in resource rich nations and passing it on to vetted orphanages, schools and feeding projects throughout the world, Restore a Child can change the trajectory of children in dire need.

Norma's early years were not easy. Abandoned by her father at an early age, she grew up with 9 people in a one-room home in Amman, Jordan. She was able to break the cycle of poverty thanks to the American missionary couple, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Darnell, who informally adopted her and gave her an education for a better future.

After school she land a plush job working for a personal friend of the Late King Hussein of Jordan. During that time, she attended the Private Pilot Training Club, passing her ground school but the war interrupted her flight training.

Even a bout with cancer would spur her on to greater opportunities. Determined to find her mission in life, she started helping needy children in the neighborhoods of Washington, D.C.

From that humble beginning 25 years ago, Restore a Child was born and has grown into a global force, today feeding over five thousand children in 13 countries and building 21 schools. Also included in her efforts are basic needs, quality education, healthcare and shelter.

In spite of its successes, Restore a Child continues to face challenges in raising money to fulfill the needs of children during war, political strife, food scarcity and natural disasters.

Norma's life today is a testament of the difference that one person can make in the world. Because of her steady devotion to nutrition, shelter, education and healthcare, thousands of children now have a better life and future.

Woman of the Year

Awardees

Drene Somasundram, PhD

Scholarship and Church Leadership

Pastor Maria Silvia Neri Castrijón

Church Leadership

Norma Nashed

Humanitarian Leadership

Olive Hemmings, PhD

Scholarship and Spiritual Leadership

Champion of Justice

Awardees

William G. Johnson, PhD

(Posthumously)

Loren Seibold, DMin



Dr. Drene Somasundram
Scholarship and Church Leadership

Dr. Drene Somasundram is a distinguished theologian and trailblazer in the field of religious leadership, known for her pioneering efforts in pastoral ministry and contributions to theological education. Born in London, UK, Drene exhibited an early passion for theology, which laid the foundation for her remarkable journey.

She completed her Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Theology and Master of Arts (MA) in Education at Newbold College in England. Subsequently, she enhanced her understanding of theology at Kings College in London and completed her Doctorate at Middlesex University in London, UK, solidifying her academic expertise. In her quest to contribute significantly to the theological landscape, Drene authored a groundbreaking thesis titled "Gender Inclusive Theological Education." This work achieved widespread recognition and earned her the esteemed Ken Goulding Award for excellence of thesis.

Drene made history by becoming the first female pastor in the Seventh-Day Adventist church in England. Her dedication to pastoral ministry led her to serve in various churches across the UK, including the prestigious New Gallery in London and churches in Cambridge and Peterborough.

Drene was invited to mentor and guide aspiring future female pastors within the South Pacific Division. Her influence extended to the academic sphere as she taught Theology at Avondale University in Australia, further impacting the theological education of future leaders.

Presently, Dr. Drene Somasundram holds a prominent position as a lecturer and Chaplain at Avondale University in Sydney, Australia, within the School of Nursing and Health. In this role, she continues to educate and inspire students, combining her theological expertise with her passion for caring for individuals in a holistic manner.

In her personal life, Drene is happily married to Martin, and they have a son named Daniel. Dr. Drene Somasundram remains a shining example of perseverance, dedication, and pioneering spirit in the realm of theology and female leadership within the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.



Maria Silvia Neri Castrejón
Church Leadership

Silvia Castrejon was born in Puebla, Mexico where she spent her childhood, adolescence and part of her youth.

In 1966 she went to Linda Vista school in Chiapas for two years of high school. At the end of the school year her uncle Pastor Jose Castrejón gave the week of prayer in which he called the youth to serve the Lord in the ministry. She decided to serve the Lord as a bible worker because of his call.

In 1968 she began her studies at the Theology Department, Montemorelos. She studied for 2 years. In 1970 After her graduation, she was invited to go to Mexico City to attend to the interests of the "Voz de la Esperanza" (Voice of Prophecy). She worked as a Bible worker in many churches of this great city.

When her mother, who was living in Montemorelos, developed cancer. Maria requested permission to take care of her mother, and while close to the University, finish her degree in religion. The theology faculty granted her permission to do this. She spent two years studying and at the same time taking care of her mother.

After her graduation she returned to the capital, but she asked to be a district pastor. She spent another 19 years working as a district pastor. In total she worked for 38 years in this capacity. She is the first female Pastor to retire in the Inter-American Division. She retired in December 2008.

She is very happy because God has kept his eyes on her and took her into account. He has used her in many ways she never could have imagined. She feels blessed to be honored by the Association of Adventist Women and gives this word of encouragement to "Praise God, to Him be the glory, united we will finish God's work."