

## Woodrow B. Seals (1917 - 1990)

Woodrow B. Seals is credited with helping to establish Perkins Theological School for the Laity, formerly known as Laity Week, at Perkins School of Theology in May 1974.

An active layperson, Judge Seals served at St. Stephen United Methodist Church in Houston. As chair of Evangelism, he reached out to the local community and brought in many new members. He instituted a program of support to the needy which later became the Society of St. Stephen. He also founded a Peace Advocate program which received national United Methodist recognition and support. He acted as a lay delegate to Jurisdictional, General, and World Conferences of the Church, and served on national boards.

Judge Seals became the first non-Catholic to receive the Papal Medal Benemerenti for his work with the needy, awarded in 1979 by Pope John Paul II. In 1987 he received the World Methodist Peace Award from the World Methodist Council.

Judge Seals served in the U. S. Army Air Corps in World War II and retired as a lieutenant colonel in the U. S. Air Force Reserve. Having received an L.L.B. degree from The University of Texas in 1949, he served as U. S. Attorney for the Southern District of Texas from 1961 to 1966 and was appointed Senior Judge, U. S. District Court, Southern District, in 1966. Among his judicial decisions was a 1980 ruling (later upheld by the U. S. Supreme Court) that declared a Texas law unconstitutional which denied illegal immigrant children access to free public education.

While active in the Harris County Democratic Party Judge Seals served as county chairman. During the 1960 presidential campaign he arranged a nationally publicized meeting between John F. Kennedy and Protestant clergy, which was credited with being influential in disarming the religious issue of the campaign.



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# 2004

## Woodrow B. Seals Laity Award



Recognizing Laypersons  
for  
Outstanding  
Commitment  
to  
Christ

Perkins School of Theology  
Southern Methodist University  
Dallas, Texas

# The Woodrow B. Seals Laity Award

The Woodrow B. Seals Laity Award is presented annually to a layperson who embodies the Christian faith and commitment of service to Christ as exemplified by Judge Seals, a distinguished layperson whose interest and energy were instrumental in establishing the Perkins Theological School for the Laity, formerly known as Laity Week, which is supported by the Howard-Holbert Endowment Fund.



**Presentation** of this prestigious award is in Dallas at the Woodrow B. Seals Laity Award Luncheon Saturday, March 6, 2004 during the annual Perkins Theological School for the Laity of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University.

**The Seals Award** honors a layperson in the United States exhibiting an exceptional commitment of service to Christ in church, community, and the world through faith and action. Selection is based upon the nominee's Christian stewardship, witness and service in the following three areas:

- #1 ..... CHURCH
- #2 ..... COMMUNITY
- #3 ..... WORLD

**Nominations** must include documentation representing the three areas listed above, as well as:

- a biographical sketch
- a minimum of three letters of recommendation from clergy and lay leadership of nominee's church and/or community organizations
- examples of nominee's activities showing commitment to Christian service within the three areas
- contact information for primary sponsor who will serve as the contact for Perkins School of Theology

The sponsor should compile all nomination materials and mail as one package. Selection is made by a committee of the Perkins Lay Advisory Board. Nominations are kept on file for three years and are reviewed annually.

## Deadline

Nominations should be submitted by December 19, 2003 to:

**The Woodrow B. Seals  
Laity Award Committee**  
c/o Roberta Cox  
Perkins School of Theology  
Southern Methodist University  
PO Box 750133  
Dallas, TX 75275-0133

## Information

To obtain additional brochures or information about the *Woodrow B. Seals Laity Award* or *Perkins Theological School for the Laity*, March 4-6, 2004, please contact:

Office of Continuing Education  
Perkins School of Theology  
Southern Methodist University  
PO Box 750133  
Dallas, TX 75275-0133  
1.888.THEOLOGY  
perkins@mail.smu.edu  
<http://www.smu.edu/theology>

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