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## **Renison Professor Receives Award for Work with International Interfaith Communities**

WATERLOO, Ontario (November 21) - On Saturday, November 12, 2011, Professor Dr. M. Darrol Bryant of Renison University College received the Huston Smith Award for Interfaith Education from the Council of Interfaith Communities of the United States (CIC-USA) at the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary gathering of Interfaith Grand River (IGR) in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.

The award is named for and with the permission of Dr. Huston Smith, popular author of the world's most widely regarded book that introduces its readers to the major religions and faith paths in the world. The book was originally published in 1958 as *The Religions of Man* and has since been renamed *The World's Religions* and has sold over two million copies around the world. The book is considered the starting point for most scholars and students of comparative theology. In his permission to the CIC-USA, Dr. Smith asked that he be able to select the first recipient of the award to be named in his honor.

Calling him his "heir apparent," Dr. Smith named the first recipient of the award as Dr. M. Darrol Bryant, Professor and Director, Centre for Dialogue and Spirituality in the World's Religions at Renison. He was educated at Concordia College, Harvard Divinity School, and the University of St. Michael's College. He has been teaching in Canada since 1967 and at Renison since 1973. The encounter and dialogue of men and women in the many traditions of religious and spiritual life has been at the heart of his work and life for the past forty years. He is the editor/author of many books including *Religion in a New Key*, *Muslim-Christian Dialogue: Promise & Problems*, *Woven on the Loom of Time* and *Out of Galilee: Christian Thought as a Great Conversation*.

Professor Bryant has been engaged in dialogue with Muslims in India, Turkey, Israel and North America; Buddhists in Korea, Japan and Tibetan Buddhists in India; Hindus, Veerashivites, Jains, Sikhs, and Christians in India; Catholic and Protestant Christians in Latin America, North America, Europe and Korea; Jews in North America and Israel, and African Christians in Kenya. Over the past twenty years he has taken groups of students to India to "Encounter the Living Religious Traditions of India." He has been a Visiting Professor at universities in India, Kenya, and Great Britain and lectured in Europe, Japan, and Latin America. Marjonneke, a Canadian film-maker, is currently making a documentary on his work in India. It is tentatively entitled "Traveling Guru."

During the presentation of the award, Dr. Bryant received a standing ovation from members of many different faiths participating in the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Interfaith Grand River, the local interfaith dialogue organization in his home community where he was the key note speaker. He afterward called that public outpouring of appreciation for his lifetime of work to educate others as "[surprising](#)"

and “overwhelming.” Dr. Bryant expressed his feelings about the honor to his peers when he stated, “I am especially honored by the fact that this award is related to the name of Huston Smith. His book, *The Religions of Man* was my introduction to the world religions and I have continued to recommend his book to my students as ‘the best introductory text on the world religions.’ Equally important were his other writings, especially *Forgotten Truth*, and *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*. I came to know Professor Smith in the 1980s and edited a volume *Huston Smith: Essays on World Religion*. Born in China, Professor Smith is not only an outstanding scholar; he is a great human being. I consider him one of my great teachers.”

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