

2007

# HUMAN RELATIONS NEWS

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Quarterly Newsletter of the LOUISIANA COUNCIL ON HUMAN RELATIONS  
 incorporating the BATON ROUGE HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL NEWSLETTER  
 SPEAKING OUT FOR A BETTER LOUISIANA SINCE 1964

ISSUE # 3

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## ANNUAL MEETING EXAMINES IMMIGRATION

The Annual Meeting of the Louisiana Council on Human Relations was held June 23rd on the campus of the University of Louisiana-Lafayette. Judice-Rickels Hall, which houses the Honors Program, provided a commodious setting for our gathering. Our Secretary, Dr. Pat Rickels, has chaired this program since 1970. She has finally retired at the end of this Spring semester, after 50 years of service to the University. She will retain an office and continue to teach a course of her choice.

Dr. Pat invited her successor as Director of the program, Dr. Julia Frederick, to serve as the Keynote Speaker. The timely topic of "THE IMMIGRATION CRISIS" was chosen. Dr. Frederick is a learned authority on the history and culture of the Mexican-U.S. border. The unity of the people on both sides of the border remains intact, despite vigilantism on the U.S. side, and the erection in places of metal walls. It has been proposed in Congress that these wall be extended for hundreds of miles.

Dr. Frederick noted that the U.S.A. has a history of nativism and anti-immigrant fervor. There are cycles where it abates in times of labor shortage, but it always returns with a vengeance. At the heart of it is Racism. It takes various forms, from vigilante-style violence, to passage of discriminatory laws to expel or restrict whichever immigrant group is most feared and hated at the time. On a few occasions, some immigrants have been welcomed for ideological reasons. If they were fleeing a Communist country, for instance, exceptions were made.

At least one-third of all immigrants are from our southern neighbor, Mexico. Over half of them are here without documentation. Their remittances to their families are second only to the oil industry as a source of cash influx for the Mexican economy. Punitive measures have been taken against these Mexican immigrants. Some western states have adopted laws which bar them from essential services such as medical care and

schooling for their children. They are frequently paid below minimum wages and subjected to unsafe and unhealthy working conditions. Although some of these practices are illegal, there has been minimal enforcement efforts.

Dr. Frederick noted that trade policies which have been imposed by the U.S. may be exacerbating the economic desperation of these migrants, giving them no choice but to "go north," however dangerous the journey may be. Manufacturing has gone overseas, and the U.S. economy is now more centered on lower-wage service jobs. Insecurity concerning our economic future is displaced onto the immigrants who are willing to work in the more unpalatable job positions.

U.S. trade policies have often sought to maintain advantages over other countries. More cooperative and responsible approaches to global development could help Latin America improve opportunities for the poor, thereby relieving the pressure to immigrate.

Responding to Dr. Frederick's talk were history professors Bradley Pollard of U.L. and Dr. Eva Baham of S.U. Prof. Pollard shared his research on immigration from Africa. The ancestors of most African-Americans were brought here against their will and define their ancestral experience as one of enslavement rather than immigration. Racism and the Atlantic deterred all but a meager few Africans from seeking refuge on our shores. In the past 25 years or so, globalization has led to a major rise in immigration from Africa. However, the principal flow of immigration from that continent is toward Europe.

Eva Baham recommended "Fast Food Nation" as an excellent book, now in paperback, that illuminates how globalization affects our daily lives. She gave a clarion call for compassion for those who must leave their families to provide for them, and for recognition of the Dignity of Work. All honest work should be seen as honorable and good.

This was an exceptionally thought-provoking Annual Meeting. We were able to continue our discussion as we dined on Chinese food which had been ordered for us by Dr. Pat.

## Remembering Archbishop Joseph Raya

(cont. from last issue)

### Part II

Archbishop Raya's ministry of peace and justice in Israel lasted a mere six years, from 1968 to 1974; but what an amazing six years those were! He came brimming with hope and optimism, but found his Christian Arab flock downcast and dispirited. They instinctively turned to their religious leader, entreating him to speak on their behalf so their grievances could be brought to the attention of the Israeli authorities.

Although proclaiming itself a democracy in which all citizens were equal under the law, in practice, the government treated the Israeli Arabs as second class citizens, subject to restrictions in their political and economic participation. Raya immediately saw the parallels with the treatment he had witnessed of African-Americans in Alabama. His prophetic ministry for justice crystallized around the cause of the villagers of Ikrit and Berem.

In 1948 these villages near the Lebanese border had welcomed the Israeli Army as liberators, assuming they would be better off under a Jewish-led government. They were asked to vacate their village for a few weeks until the War of Independence was concluded, but permission to return was never forthcoming.

In 1951 the villagers were able to obtain redress before the Israeli Supreme Court, which ruled in their favor. However, the Army ignored the ruling of the Court and proceeded to destroy everything in the villages.



Only the church in each village was left standing, but derelict. The dispossessed villagers were dispersed around Israel and were living in crowded, sub-standard conditions. Over 20 years had passed, but the villagers stayed connected and continued to press for their rights under the law.

Alarmed by government rhetoric about the "impossibility" of returning land to Arabs, the villagers invaded the residence of Archbishop Raya and demanded his immediate help. Raya sprang into action, with a two-year campaign of nonviolent action, inspired by strategies he had witnessed in the campaigns of Dr. King in Alabama.

There were live-ins and pray-ins at the site of the villages. Sometimes the protesters were barred entry or arrested. If unable to reach the churches, Raya would hold open-air baptisms, and the police cordon would also be well sprinkled with holy water.

Raya made the highly unusual move of locking-up all 33 Melkite churches on a Sunday. Instead, the bells pealed in protest, and the faithful were invited to a mass march in Jerusalem. Joining him at the helm was Uri Avnery, the "lion" of the Israeli Left. The aims of the march were endorsed by both left-wing and right-wing factions. Jews, Christians, Muslims and Druze joined hands as they rallied and marched for Ikrit and Berem and on behalf of justice and equality for all citizens of Israel.

The nonviolent actions continued, and a year later Raya held a 3-day, water-only fast lying in front of the Knesset, appealing to the legislators to pressure the government to reverse its stance. Dozens of Jews and Arabs joined the fast and Knesset members came out to declare their support.

Still, there was no breakthrough. The government of Golda Meir was in no mood to back down on anything. Raya met with Mrs. Meir several times though, and they connected on a personal level. He appealed to her that "no end justifies injustice....If you base security on a denial of justice, there is no accumulation of money which will guarantee that security; not even an army as strong as the Romans will ensure it....Are we erecting idols of our own making in this land? the idol of 'security'? ..I beg you, Madame Prime Minister, to respond to this call...the world needs to witness your guaranteeing your citizens their rights based on justice."

While his eloquence failed to move the government, public opinion was moved. Nevertheless, the villagers of Ikrit and Berem were never able to return to their pastoral lives in their ancestral villages. The Army

## Raya Remberbered, cont.

command declared this peaceful border area of strategic importance and would not relinquish their control. The border was to become the scene of military incursions and clashes in the ensuing years.

It was a missed opportunity for the Israeli government. Intransigence toward any return of land to even a small number of Israeli Arab citizens only strengthened the hand of those Arabs who believed nonviolent protest was ineffectual and the only answer was armed struggle.

On the other hand, there were positive outcomes of the campaign for Ikrit and Berem. No longer were Israeli Arabs resigned to second class citizenship. Through nonviolent action, they had learned they could assert their rights, engage in the rough and tumble of political protest, and win the good will of the majority of their Jewish neighbors.

## Part III

The campaign for Ikrit and Berem cast Archbishop Raya in high profile. Other religious leaders in the region, and those in Rome, tended to be uncomfortable with his notoriety and reluctant to lend support his efforts. This again paralleled the experience of Martin Luther King, who had incurred staunch criticism from Southern religious leaders. Moreover, Raya was a relentless critic of the religious status quo in the "Holy Land". He accused the

Latin Patriarchate, the Franciscan Custody, and British and American Protestants of colonialist overlord mentalities, disrespectful of the religious and cultural heritage of local Eastern Christians. They had, he stated, made religion a thing of money and power. Money was used to buy converts, competitively control the shrines and accommodate western pilgrims, while the needs of the local poor were addressed in token or demeaning fashion. The building of a huge Italian-style shrine amidst the slums of Nazareth incensed him.

The Melkite Patriarch, Maximos V Hakim, was perturbed by Archbishop Raya's style of administration in what had once been his own eparchy (diocese). The Patriarch and Vatican congregations, protective of Catholic interests, were alarmed by his virtually giving away a large tract of land near Mt. Tabor to poor Muslim peasants, who had worked the land for generations. For Raya it was a matter of social justice.

Even more upsetting to the Vatican and the Melkite Synod, was his declaration in favor of the Israeli annexation of Jerusalem. For an Arab prelate to say such a thing was shocking. His declaration in favor of a Palestinian State on the West Bank and Gaza was likewise viewed with consternation by the Israeli government, at a time when they refused to even acknowledge the existence of a Palestinian people.

On the question of Jerusalem, Raya felt it was better



Uri &amp; Rachel Avnery with Archbishop Raya

for the Holy City to be unified under one administration, and he trusted that Israel would fairly administer it with respect for the holy sites of Christians and Muslims. Furthermore, he saw it as a theological issue, in that Jerusalem was of central significance to Judaism. It is of tertiary significance for Islam, after Mecca and Medina; and for Christians, as beloved as the shrines may be, they are not essential to the faith. In his Christian belief, the locus of Divinity was in a person rather than a place, and by the incarnation of Christ all human persons are sanctified. Raya's position was also consistent with his assertion that the Catholic Church was devoting more attention to upkeep of the shrines of the Holy Land, rather than the "living stones" of her people.

The Vatican had been promoting a solution of an international administration of Jerusalem under U.N. auspices, and they were growing tired of what they regarded as the imprudent pronouncements of this Archbishop. Raya found himself in the untenable position of having his right to run his eparchy as he saw fit trampled upon. He was offended to have his ministry of peace and



## Raya Remembered, cont.

justice hamstrung; but rather than lash out and defy the Pope and Patriarch, he took the high road of resigning from his see.

Thousands of his flock, and even Golda Meir herself, urged him to retract his resignation. But, with a heavy heart, he bade farewell to his flock. Reflecting on his time in Israel he wrote. "I came to the Holy Land to give. And behold! I was overwhelmed by what I received. I came to enrich and purify!, and behold! I was the one to be enriched and purified! I loved the family of the Lord. His family includes both the Jews and the Arabs. I held the Muslims, the Druze, the Jew, and Christian, everyone, believer and unbeliever, in the same embrace. How I yearned to wash their feet and hold them to my heart and try to weld them into one heart and one soul and show them all how they can live together, love together, and see the radiance of God in each others' face. Was not that the vision of Christ in the Gospel?"

### Part IV

Archbishop Joseph Raya loved being a pastor, and asked his people to call him "Papa Joe." He loved to give parties for the children and the youth. The smile of child was to him the most convincing evidence of the existence of God. Now he was without a parish or eparchy of his own, but he was still a Melkite bishop. Years before he had found a spiritual base in the Madonna House Apostolate, and he retired to their retreat and training center in Ontario, Canada. Nearing sixty, he wished to spiritually deepen himself through prayer, study, and solitude.

The Madonna House movement was founded by Baroness

Catherine DeHueck Doherty. She was a refugee from Russia and a close contemporary of the better-known Dorothy Day. Her movement stressed contemplation and action, simplicity and poverty, and the balancing of the wisdom traditions of the Christian East and West with each other.

At Madonna House Raya was much beloved. He completed his massive translation of all the Byzantine liturgies into English, composed liturgical chants, and wrote poetry and several books on Eastern spirituality. He sometimes was invited to lecture and teach at seminaries and universities, and would continue to speak out with prophetic stands.

As some Melkite Catholics grew wealthier, they sought to align the Church with conservative political groups. Raya's uncompromising commitment to the Gospel call of peace and justice would rub them the wrong way.

By the mid-1980's Patriarch Maximos V realized that the talents of Archbishop Joseph were in short supply, and he ordered him back into active duty with the Church. He was sent to Lebanon, land of his birth. First, he was asked to completely revamp the curricula at the various Melkite seminaries in the Middle East.

Lebanon had been racked by civil war for nearly 15 years. The country and the church was in shambles. A peacemaker was needed to begin the difficult work of rebuilding and healing the shattered communities. Raya was now past 70 and suffering with a heart condition, but he agreed to put in several more years of grueling work.

In Beirut he ministered to the refugees and challenged all he met to put aside enmity and begin the work of reconciliation. He was then sent to take charge of the southern eparchy that bordered with Israel. He boldly met with the Druze warlord, Kemal Jumblatt, who had slaughtered the Christians and carted off their church bells to his mountain villa. The churches were reopened, although without bells. Christians, Muslims, and Druze were brought together in a



Joseph Raya & Uri Avnery at the Ikrit Church

project to replant the fields and olive groves. Raya, himself, planted over 5,000 olive trees with his own hands. These groves matured and yielded abundant harvests; but most likely they were decimated in the recent War along the Lebanese/Israeli border

Like a Hebrew prophet of old, Raya predicted the end of Lebanon as a so-called "oasis of Christianity" within the Arab world. He bluntly stated that in their long grip on the reins of political and economic power, Christian political leaders had strayed from the message of the Gospel. Their only remaining alternatives were to accept the ascendancy of Muslims in Lebanon, or emigrate.

In 1989 Archbishop Raya was able to return to Madonna House, but he continued to maintain the bonds of friendship with his many old friends in the Middle East.

### Part V

In 2004, Uri Avnery, the aging "Lion of the Left" in Israel had heard that Joseph Raya, his old comrade from the glorious days of the Ikrit and Berem campaign, was in serious health decline. As a former nominee himself, Avnery

## Raya Remembered, cont.

was able to formally present Raya's name in nomination for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. He intended this, not only as a gesture of esteem to an old friend, but as a reminder that there once was a time when Jews and Arabs had walked hand in hand in a movement to bring about justice and peace; and in doing so they honored the principles of nonviolent action pioneered by the 1964 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Archbishop Joseph was surprised by the efforts of many old friends who wrote letters on his behalf to the Nobel Committee. The Committee, however, turned elsewhere in selecting the recipient of the 2005 Peace Prize. While his friends were disappointed, Archbishop Raya was not. He had joyously celebrated the 50th and 60th anniversaries of his priestly ordination, and felt no need for further honors such as a Nobel Peace Prize.

Something that had happened in 2003, had touched his heart more than any award could ever. He had received a long-distance call in Canada from an old man in Alabama. The old man asked if he was speaking to Fr. Joe, who had once been a pastor in Birmingham. He then identified himself as one of three KKK-members who gave him a severe beating there in the 1950's. The old man described how when he was kicking him in the chest and calling him a "n-lover", that Fr. Joe had responded by saying "Yes, I am a n-lover, and I am a KKK-lover too! I love you!" Those words had stuck with him, and the old man said he was ashamed of what he had done, and asked "Fr. Joe" for his forgiveness. Fr. Joe could also

truthfully tell him he had continued to pray for him over those many years.

In June of 2005, at Madonna House, Joseph M. Raya quietly slipped into the eternal life he had long lived in hope of, at the age of 88.

## Part VI

The story of Archbishop Raya and the hope for nonviolent action in Israel/Palestine is not dead and gone. The world's attention has focused on the unending violence that has defaced that ancient land; the suicide bombings, rocket launches, massive retaliatory strikes, assassinations, and on and on. Yet, there is another story of nonviolent projects of dialogue and action which bring Jews and Arabs together. Nonviolent protest, while often muffled by the highly militarized culture and actions of both Israelis and Palestinians, has continued. International teams of people from the West, pilgrims for peace and justice, have at times joined them in witness.

Not long after Joseph Raya's death, Fr. Elias Chacour, was named the new Melkite Archbishop of Akka, Haifa, Nazareth and all-Galilee. Fr. Chacour was born in Berem. He was a little boy when the villagers went into exile in 1948. As a newly-ordained priest he took part in the movement on behalf of Ikrit and Berem, and was deeply influenced by Archbishop Raya. Fr. Elias

believed that the education of the young was very important in preparing for a future of religious and ethnic pluralism and equality. To this end, he founded the Mar Elias Educational Institutions. This school system has expanded from one small elementary school to include thousands of students, and is noted for excellence. Archbishop Elias embraces his identity as both Israeli and Palestinian. He has been an outspoken advocate for his people and has been the recipient of a number of peace prizes, and has also been a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The mantle of leadership has been passed on, and the dream of Archbishop Raya lives on; a dream that Israelis and Palestinians; Jews, Christians, and Muslims; may live in peace, sharing the land. If they view one another through the lens of peace and love, they will find the "face of God", and with God all things are possible, even peace in the Middle East.

*article prepared from "Go to the Deep: The Life of Archbishop Joseph M. Raya" edited by Lesya Sabada. Available (\$25 + shipping) from*

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# HUMAN RELATIONS NEWS

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**NO. 3**

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## **Baton Rouge Council Holds Annual Meeting**

The Annual meeting of the B.R.C.H.R. was held Saturday, June 14th, at University Presbyterian Church. Monica Olivier, President and C.E.O. of the Baton Rouge Center for World Affairs and a leader of the One Baton Rouge Committee was the guest speaker. Ms. Olivier related a story of the creation of One Baton Rouge, and stressed the importance of having a community which is diverse, unified, and inclusive. She pointed out how the city's International Heritage Festival brings together fifty or more cultures in the Baton Rouge area.

Officers were elected for the fiscal year of July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008. The side-bar on the left notes the new Board of Directors. The newly-elected for a three-year term are Nathan Gottfried, George F. Lundy, S.J., Robert Thomson, Laurabeth H. Hicks, Harvey Hoffman, Valerie Jackson Jones, Bridget Udoh, Eileen Shieber, Edward Zganjar, and Thelma Deamer. Leaving the Board are Joyce W. Robinson, who has served as Secretary for several years, Roosevelt Stephenson, and Margaret Pereboom.

Treasurer Dan Yannitell presented his annual report on BRCHR finances, and President Green distributed copies of her annual report of BRCHR activities in 2006-2007. A change in Article V of the BRCHR By-laws was approved at this meeting in order to create a new officer position, Membership Secretary. Richard Haymaker was elected to this position. The next Board meeting was announced. It is at the home of Diana Dorroh, 1635 Leycester Dr. in the Kenilworth subdivision, on **August 9th at 7 p.m.** All Board members are expected to be in attendance, but if unable to attend to give prior notice to the Secretary.

## **Pereboom Honored**

Ms. Margaret Pereboom is a long-time B.R.C.H.R. member who has served on our Board. On May 20th, she was honored at a Farewell Open House, held at the home of Richard and Holley Galland Haymaker. Margaret has been a Psychologist in private practice for many years, and was elected to serve on the E.B.R. Parish School Board several years ago. Margaret served as Secretary

of B.R.C.H.R. in 1966-68, and in recent years has served again on the Board. She will be moving to Georgia for her retirement. She has been a longtime stalwart of the human relations movement in our community and will be sorely missed.



## **Human Race Walk in Baton Rouge**

On Saturday, May 19th, Baton Rouge held its first "Human Race Walk," celebrating the city's unity and diversity. The project was part of a new program called "One Baton Rouge" which Mayor-President Kip Holden, and a number of religious and civic organizations have recently organized. The purpose is the "acceptance and integration of people of all colors, religions, sexual orientations, nationalities, and all walks-of-life, into every aspect of Baton Rouge community life, so that we all will be enriched by each other." Familiar wording? Certainly! Because this purpose is practically the same as the goal of the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations, established 42 years ago. We should be grateful that Baton Rouge leaders have caught up with us finally.

A speaker's bureau was set up to provide speakers about One Baton Rouge.

Lasting about an hour, the walk took place on the LSU campus. Two former presidents of the BRCHR, Dr. Paul Y. Burns and Rev. J. Philip Woodland, joined President Marjorie Green, and about 120 others in the celebration. More information is available on the website: **OneBatonRouge.com**. Next year's Walk will be held April 26, 2008 at the same location. Y'all come!!

## Update on the ONE BOOK ONE COMMUNITY Reading Program

## ISTROUMA H.S. UPDATE

EBR Parish Mayor-President Kip Holden, and other community leaders, announced the 2007 "ONE BOOK ONE COMMUNITY Summer Selection" in May. The book chosen was Jed Horne's *Breach of Faith: Hurricane Katrina and the Near Death of a Great American City*.

The OBOC's aim is to focus on a common reading experience, which hopefully will trigger intellectual and cultural dialogue on an issue of importance to Baton Rouge's people. OBOC's organizing sponsors include the Y.W.C.A. of Greater Baton Rouge, Southern University, L.S.U., Baton Rouge Community College, Redstick Internet Services, Random House Publishing Group, Forum 35, and the E.B.R. Parish Library.

Mayor Holden explained, "Hurricane Katrina threatened a culture that is unique in the world, one which all Louisianans share. Our city was also deeply impacted as we sheltered some 250,000 people displaced by the storm. I encourage the Greater Baton Rouge community to read along with me and participate in the upcoming

events surrounding the book, so we may all gain a greater understanding of the problems that remain as we work together to rebuild a stronger state."

More information is available on the website at: [www.ReadOneBook.org](http://www.ReadOneBook.org).

The schedule of events include a tantalizing and extensive list of parish-wide events. There will be a book-signing with the author on June 9th at the Louisiana State Museum, 660 N. 4th St. (near the State Capitol). Also, there will be an Exhibit on Flood-walls from July 13th through Oct. 13th. Author Horne will give a community address on Thursday, August 23rd, at Cox Communications Academic Center for Student Athletes on the L.S.U. campus (corner of Fieldhouse and N. Stadium Dr.), 7 p.m. On Thursday, Sept. 13th, Southern University's Smith-Brown Memorial Union will host a Community Discussion about *Breach of Faith* at 7 p.m. in the Ballroom. In Baker, at the Civic Center a Panel Discussion and Small-group Dialogue will be held on Thursday, Sept. 27th, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Additional Community Discussions are being planned and will be announced soon on the website.

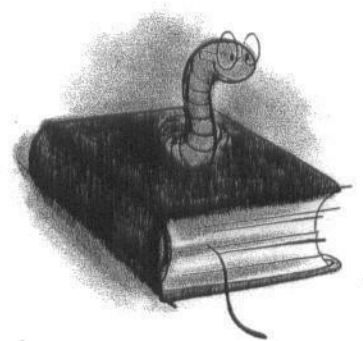
E-mail updates may be requested.

The E.B.R. Parish Library will host a series of OBOC events. These include a "Blue Tarp/Duct Tape Fashion Show and the D.E.Q." at 2:30 p.m., Saturday, August 25th at the Greenwell Springs Rd. Branch.

David Spielman, the author of *The Katrinaville Chronicles*, will speak at the Main Library on Goodwood Blvd., 3 p.m., Sunday the 26th of August. There will be Library Discussion Events, led by trained facilitators at a number of libraries near the end of August. Check the website for details.

The One Book One Community project is an outgrowth of L.S.U.'s Summer Reading Program for incoming freshmen. They are all required to read the same book and to discuss it within their freshman-year classes. The program has been so successful it has been expanded to include the entire Baton Rouge community for the second consecutive year. The exchange of ideas that is fostered through this program serves as a training ground for a democratic society. (from Paul Y. Burns)

For many years the BRCHR has made cash awards to students at its "adopted" school, Istrouma H.S. on Winbourne Ave., during the spring semester. This year Amanda Brown received an award for being the "Most Improved" student over the past four years. Kenisha and Kendra Charles were given awards for "Perfect Attendance," and Alvin Wallace received an award for "Highest Academic Performance." Congratulations to these students, and all the students of Istrouma H.S. who are serious about their education.



Did you know.....

**That the population of Baton Rouge is approx. 225,000 and 24% live below the poverty line?**

## "FLOODWALL" EXHIBIT MIXES ART AND ORAL HISTORY

EBR Mayor-President Kip Holden is helping two artists locate New Orleans residents displaced to the Baton Rouge area to participate in an oral history project that will accompany a major exhibit at the State Museum this summer.

"Floodwall", a wall of drawers 120 ft. long and 8 ft. tall, was constructed of

drawers salvaged from flooded homes in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, with each catalogued by address.

On the heels of a successful exhibition in New York, it will open here on July 13th, and eventually travel to Europe with oral histories.

The artists are searching

for the owners of the drawers to gather oral histories to accompany the exhibit. Displaced residents can visit [www.floodwall.org](http://www.floodwall.org) to see if their address is included among the drawer recovered in New Orleans. Artists Rondell Crier, Jana Napoli, and oral historian Tatiana Clay are creators of the project. (from [brgov.com](http://brgov.com))

## OLIVER-SIGUR HUMANITARIAN AWARDS PRESENTED FOR 2007

In recent years the Louisiana Council on Human Relations has presented two Awards at the Annual

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Meeting that are named in memory of two seminal figures from the early days of the L.C.H.R., Dr. James Oliver and Msgr. Alexander O. Sigur. Dr. Patricia Rickels presented the awards this year to

**HECTOR LASALA and ROBERTA MADDEN.**

Hector LaSala is a professor of Architecture and Design who has taught at U.L. for over 30 years. Not only is he an outstanding teacher, but he imbues his students with a social consciousness about their work. To this end he has involved them in projects to enhance the Acadiana Outreach Center and urban transportation corridors. He is committed to architecture that is of human scale and enhances community living, and conveys his enthusiasm for these humanistic values to his students.

Hector is a native of El Salvador who still retains a delightful accent. He is a committed citizen who ably expresses his progressive views in public forums. He has quietly given countless hours of service through the program of A.A. He has reached out and provided advocacy and mentoring,

particularly through the program of A.A., for recent Latin American immigrants who have encountered legal or social problems related to their alcohol use.

Roberta Madden has been a leader of the Y.W.C.A. of Greater Baton Rouge for many years, and is an exemplar of dynamic and committed community activism. She has put improvement of the status of women and the elimination of racism at the forefront of the mission of the Y.W.C.A. and continues to work diligently to make these urgent agenda issues for the community-at-large. Although Roberta had, quite some years ago, been a recipient of the Powell-Reznikoff Humanitarian Award of the Baton Rouge Council, there has been no let-up in her determination to achieve the above goals. Her work deserves to be recognized and emulated state-wide, and thus, she was chosen this year for L.C.H.R.'s Oliver-Sigur Award. BRCHR member Linda Watkins gave a spontaneous accolade on behalf of Roberta's friends and admirers. In accepting the Award, Roberta stated that she is now 70, but has no intention of retiring from her mission on behalf of equality and justice.

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