

WARTBURG COLLEGE ALUMNI CITATION

AWARDED OCTOBER 16, 2011



The Rev. Dr. Mark Pries '71

Since earning a Master of Divinity degree at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Mark Pries has spent 36 years in service to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Most recently, he served Peace Lutheran Church in Pella for 20 years before accepting his current call at Zion Lutheran Church in Iowa City.

Present and former parishioners describe Pries as “the epitome of a pastor,” “a genuine shepherd,” “an eloquent speaker and storyteller,” and a leader who brings “a joy in the faith that is contagious.”

Early in his career, Pries served with his internship mentor and fellow Wartburg alumnus, the Rev. John Beem, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Dubuque. Beem, a retired ELCA bishop, says “Mark excels in providing pastoral care, theological scholarship, and, notably, touching people on the fringes.” Pries initiated the Dubuque Jail Chaplaincy Program and served on the Dubuque Human Rights Commission during seven years at Holy Trinity.

His longtime service in Pella mirrored his pastoral gifts and his wide-ranging interests. He was president of the Pella Ministerial Board, helped start an annual church mission trip to Mexico, and initiated a sister congregation partnership in Tanzania. He opened the church to Wartburg fans attending athletic contests at the Central College campus across the street. He received an Iowa Arts Council Grant to study Vincent Van Gogh in Europe. He served as both a high school speech contest judge and a high school football official. In 2005, he completed a Doctor of Ministry degree from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

Since moving to Zion in 2007, Pries has guided a revival of spirit and commitment now evident in a church renovation project described as 20 years overdue. Church member John Keller, dean of the University of Iowa Graduate College, observes that Pries has “an incredible knack of using a faith and spiritual-based approach to guide our path forward.”

Characteristically, Pries is also involved in the Iowa City community through the Lutheran Chaplaincy Outreach at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, the Shelter House Board of Directors, and the Iowa City Partners for Alcohol Safety Steering Committee. He is a former member of the Wartburg Seminary Board of Regents and the Camp EWALU Board of Directors.

His son, Matt, concludes that “When you think of living out Wartburg’s mission, Dad exemplifies it: a spirited expression of faith and learning.”

The Wartburg Alumni Association is pleased to present this Alumni Citation to Pastor Mark Pries in recognition of his spirited service to church and community.

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Romaine "Ro" Foege '60

Romaine "Ro" Foege has demonstrated a passion for working with at-risk children and shaping policies to improve life for vulnerable Iowans throughout a distinguished career in social work.

After earning a master's degree in social work at the University of Iowa, Foege joined the Linn County Department of Social Services in Cedar Rapids, where he was involved in development of a foster family care program and provided supervision to nine public child welfare services. He spent 12 years with Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Dubuque before joining the Grant Wood Area Education Agency, where he worked as a school social worker from 1978 until his retirement in 2001.

Elected in 1996 as a state representative in House District 29, Foege championed the cause of children and families. He chaired the Health and Human Service Appropriation Subcommittee and co-chaired the Iowa Commission on Affordable Health Care for Families and Small Businesses. He was principal author and sponsor of the Community Empowerment Early Childhood Initiative and served on a task force to develop the Iowa State Children's Health Insurance Program. He left the House in 2008 but returned to state government in 2010, when he accepted a nine-month appointment as interim director of the Iowa Department of Aging.

Kelli Soyer, executive director Iowa's chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, lauds Foege's ability to work with others. "As a legislator, he was able to work across the aisle to pass legislation and budgets that were helpful to Iowans," she said. "As an administrator, he knew the importance of building relationships with his employees and others in the community to work effectively and get the job done."

Foege continues to influence state and national policy as a member of the Annie E. Casey National Family & Children's Services Advisory Committee, the Iowa Consortium of Comprehensive Cancer Control, Iowa Healthcare Collaborative Board, and the Iowa Policy Project Board.

Throughout his career, he also has remained loyal to his alma mater, serving on the Social Work National Advisory Board, speaking to classes, and, as a state legislator, introducing citations celebrating Wartburg athletic and academic achievements and hosting social work students, music groups, and athletic teams at the Statehouse.

Ro Foege's passion to make life better for children and their families upholds Wartburg's mission of leadership, service, faith, and learning. The Wartburg Alumni Association recognizes his remarkable achievements with this Alumni Citation.

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Conrad '75 and Kathleen Osterbur '75 Mandsager

Conrad and Kathleen Osterbur Mandsager are known nationally and internationally for their work with ChildVoice International, an organization dedicated to restoring the voices of children victimized by war, abduction, and slavery.

ChildVoice is one of many initiatives spearheaded by this couple, who met at Wartburg and have dedicated their lives to serving at-risk and disenfranchised populations.

“Their efforts have made a meaningful difference in the lives of men, women, and children around the globe,” noted nominator Janet Hertel Felberg, Kathy Mandsager’s roommate at Wartburg.

Before establishing his own consulting firm in 2004, Conrad Mandsager was instrumental in creating the country’s second-largest mentoring program for at-risk youth as a senior consultant with Dare Mighty Things. As director of field ministry for JAF Ministries in California, he designed and launched Wheels for the World, which refurbishes and distributes wheelchairs to children in more than 60 countries. As an area and national director for Prison Fellowship Ministries in Washington, D.C., he developed the first volunteer-run prison in the United States.

Kathleen Mandsager has served alongside her husband in many of these initiatives. She was correspondence coordinator at JAF Ministries, an organization dedicated to advancing the disability community—work that was particularly meaningful to the Mandsagers, whose son, Thad, is a quadriplegic.

Kathy spent more than a decade in administrative support positions at the University of New Hampshire’s Environmental Hazards Management Institute, Office of the Vice President for Research and Public Service, and Coastal Response Research Center. She also organized a local chapter of Canine Companions for Independence, which trains service dogs for people with disabilities.

When Conrad founded ChildVoice International in 2006, Kathy joined him as team and intern coordinator for the multi-phase project in northern Uganda. Its programs are based on the conviction that children beaten down by the horrors of war can be restored in safe communities with loving care, spiritual and psychosocial counseling, and effective education and vocational training. The Mandsagers have provided a home for one of Uganda’s ex-child soldiers since 2008 and have involved four generations of their family in the work of ChildVoice.

Conrad and Kathleen Mandsager have exemplified Wartburg’s mission pillars of leadership, service, faith, and learning in their lives and work. The Wartburg College Alumni Association recognizes their exemplary efforts with this Alumni Citation.