

Department of Politics and Government

JAMES J. HEARN AWARD FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

The James J. Hearn award was established in 1953 on the occasion of Mr. Hearn's graduation from college. He came to Ohio Wesleyan from Deerfield Academy and his hometown, Brooklyn, New York.

The award was established to encourage wider participation by college men and women in the affairs of the government. It is awarded each spring by the Politics and Government Department to the student who has demonstrated his or her abilities and dedication to public service.

Previous recipients have gone on to become lawyers, candidates for public office, legislators, members of legislative staffs, government administrators, and to earn their Masters' in Public Administration. One previous recipient received the highest score ever recorded on the Ohio Bar Exam. And so the tradition continues

James J. Hearn was Chief of the Community Food and Nutrition Program in the Office of Family Service Administration, Department of Health and Human Services. The Community Food and Nutrition Program is a federal grant program to assist depressed communities in initiating new programs to meet the nutrition and health needs of populations in underserved and unserved areas. Hearn was also a staff member of the Nutrition Policy Board which developed the Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health, 1989.

A career civil servant holding senior rank, he served as Director the National Veterans Private Initiative Program (VPIP) in ACTION and later in the Office of the Secretary. He was Director of Special Programs in the Office of Community Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and was Chief of Intergovernmental Relations and Director of the Federal Task Force on Food and Shelter for the Homeless.

In his 27-year tenure with the Federal Government, Mr. Hearn held many other positions in management and program development, notably in the Community Services Administration (formerly the Office of Economic Opportunity--OEO). He was Chief of Housing Programs for that agency, directed special task forces on employment of low-income citizens in government and on special audit problems and served as Director of Training and Technical Assistance for OEO's 11-state North Central Region.

Early in his governmental career, he held posts in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Economic Development Administration and was a staff member of President Johnson's original Task Force on Poverty, as well as a similar committee in the U.S. Senate. He also was one the nation's first anti-poverty program

directors, serving in North Carolina and Mississippi. Many of the innovations developed under his leadership became permanent features of governmental programs, in community action, fiscal management, housing, leadership training, new careers, veterans' initiatives, activities for the homeless, and the expansion of food banks for the poor.

Mr. Hearn's professional experience also included service to Third World nations. He was stationed in North Africa as an officer in the U.S. Air Force and later directed a CARE program in India. He represented his agency and other organizations in Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa. He was a member of the Corps of Expert Advisors to the United Nations, U.N. Habitat, and the World Bank. In later years, he assisted the governments of Malawi, Sierra Leone, and Suriname in the development of national housing policies and programs. Over the years, he assisted the International Relations Committee of the African Methodist Episcopal Church through LEND Inc. to develop plans for housing in Zambia and other developing countries.

Mr. Hearn was the Washington representative of the Inter-University Consortium for International Social Development, an organization of representatives of 40-plus institutions of higher education in North America, Great Britain, and Third World nations, and he was the Vice-Chair of the Technical Assistance Project of that organization.

Mr. Hearn was commended for outstanding services by the U.S. Air Force, the United Nations, The Office of Economic Opportunity, the Community Services Administration, ACTION, and many local communities.

Mr. Hearn served as guest lecturer in several American universities and served as an adjunct professor at the Washington Center, offering courses in "Community Partnerships" and "Socioeconomic Development in the Third World" to university students completing internships in the nation's capital. He was a member of the advisory board to the Arneson Institute for Practical Politics and Public Affairs at Ohio Wesleyan University. He was the author of several publications and presented papers at international conferences. A resident of Washington, D.C., he also served on boards and committees of several local voluntary human services agencies, including membership in Partners for The Americas, which works on social programs with D.C.'s "sister" city, Brasilia, in a poverty community.

Mr. Hearn graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University and received his LLB degree at New York Law School. He undertook graduate studies at Oxford and London Universities in history and economics. He traveled extensively through Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America, both as a visitor and in a professional capacity.

James J. Hearn passed away January 3, 2010.