

RESOLUTION #12

**AFT MICHIGAN
70TH CONVENTION
MAY 2-3, 2008**

**PRESENTATION OF
WALTER BERGMAN HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD
TO MAURICE GEARY**

Whereas, Maurice Geary has devoted his life to improving the quality of life for all people. He continues to fight for equality and the rights of women, minorities and the less fortunate. He is a courageous and committed unionist and activist. He is the embodiment of what is good, kind and just; and

Whereas, Brother Geary grew up in Detroit where he attended public and Catholic schools and in 1947 was ordained to the priesthood. He spent the next 21 years as an assistant in six parishes, was a counselor at Marian High School and taught Philosophy and Theology at Marygrove College; and

Whereas, In 1965, as part of the Civil Rights Movement, Maurice went to Alabama where he met the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and joined the other dedicated volunteers in Selma; and

Whereas, Brother Geary again joined Dr. King in 1967 in a march and demonstration against the war in Vietnam. And, participated in the Poor People's Campaign and Resurrection City project under the leadership of the Reverend Abernathy and Hosea Williams after the assassination of Dr. King on April 4, 1968; and

Whereas, In Detroit he worked for the movement for open housing and was arrested with fourteen other clergymen for seizing a house on Hobart Street that was scheduled for demolition as part of an urban renewal project. The razing of the entire neighborhood left many families homeless. Mr. Geary then joined the West Central Organization, a part of New Detroit that worked to find housing for displaced families; and

Whereas, Facing severe opposition to his activism, he found it necessary to leave the priesthood and went to work for the Department of Civil Rights in Detroit. He organized a union there and was summarily fired; and

Whereas, He worked as a substitute teacher in the Detroit Public Schools until taking a position as a community relations worker at Wayne County Community College (WCCC) in Detroit. While at WCCC he was on the Executive Board of the Professional and Administrative Association (P&AA) AFT 4467, participated in numerous strikes and many position changes; and

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Whereas, Maurice Geary continues to be active with the Gray Panthers; Peace Action; the Democratic Socialists of America; the Michigan Alliance for Strengthening Social Security and Medicare (an organization he also help found) and serves on the AFT Michigan Retiree Network Administrative Committee; and

Whereas, He recently returned from Chicago where he took part in the march against the war in Iraq. Mr. Geary remains dedicated and determined to continue in the struggle for social change, peace and justice. NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED: For all he has accomplished and will continue to accomplish for so many, AFT Michigan presents Maurice Geary with the 2008 Walter Bergman Human Rights Award

Submitted by:
Human Rights Committee