

## Honoree Fact Sheet — Vern Barnet

NAME: The Reverend Vern Barnet, DMn

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COUNTY: Jackson

AGE: 79

### WHAT SERVICE MEANS TO ME

Service to others, for others, is a way to express my faith and gratitude for the gift of life. The lucky encounters I've had with folks from the three families of the world's religions — Primal, Asian, and Monotheistic — have propelled me to study and share their wisdom to heal the corresponding three interlocking crises of our era — in the environment, in personhood, and in social order. It is a joy to fulfill a duty to promote such wisdom in serving the Kansas City community and beyond.

### SELECTED LIST OF SERVICE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- \*Founded the Kansas City Interfaith Council
- \*Served on Mayor Cleaver's 1996 Task Force on Race Relations
- \*Organized the area's main day-long observance of the first anniversary of 9/11
- \*Coordinated the Christian Jewish Muslim Dialogue Group
- \*Chaired the Jackson County 9/11 Diversity Task Force
- \*Wrote 947 columns for a weekly column on faith for The Kansas City Star
- \*Provided commentary for media such as The Kansas City Jewish Chronicle, KCPT, and KCUR
- \*Co-created and led the Youth Leadership Institute for the Overland Park Rotary Club
- \*Co-edited *The Essential Guide to Religious Traditions and Spirituality for Health Care Providers*
- \*Provided hundreds of educational programs on religion for various groups
- \*Board member, Friends of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas
- \*Board member, the American Friends Service Committee
- \*Board member, the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) local affiliate
- \*Board member, the Overland Park Rotary Club
- \*Board member, the Shawnee Mission School of International Studies
- \*Board member, the Kansas City Tomorrow Alumni Association
- \*Board member, the Shawnee Mission Medical Center's Institute for Spirituality and Health Advisory Board
- \*Board member, the MAINstream Coalition Board
- \*Board member, Mayor's UN Day Committee
- \*Board member, the NCCJ (National Conference for Community and Justice (formerly National Conference of Christians and Jews)
- \*Board member, the Gift of Life Foundation
- \*Volunteer in many capacities for church, diocese, and groups like the YMCA and the Boy Scouts.

### BIO MAX-WORD: 250

The Reverend Vern Barnet, DMn, completed his studies at the University of Chicago and an affiliated seminary with a doctoral dissertation applying a key Buddhist teaching to ministry. After serving parishes in Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Kansas, he was so charmed by friends of many faiths here that he decided to focus his work in Kansas City by creating the Center for Religious Experience and Study ("CRES"). Although his focus is local, he has spoken and been published internationally. With one foot in community organizing, the other has been in the academy, with adjunct teaching for Park and Ottawa universities and the Unity Institute, the Saint Paul School of Theology, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, and Sophia Retreat Center (Benedictine). Six weeks after 9/11, he presided over the area's first 3-day interfaith conference, "The Gifts of Pluralism," which he organized with the Interfaith Council and several other organizations. He brought to Kansas City the nation's first "Interfaith Academies for Religious Professionals and Students," created by the Pluralism Project at Harvard and Religions for Peace at the UN Plaza. He has been honored by Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, interfaith, professional, civic, and secular organizations. His book of 154 sonnets, *Thanks for Noticing: The Interpretation of Desire*, was published in 2015. He was the developmental editor for *Binding Us Together*, the autobiography of Alvin L. Brooks, published earlier this year.

### EMPLOYMENT AND KEY ORGANIZATIONS

I think the above may be sufficient.