



MEDIA RELEASE

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19th Annual Brother Raymond L. Fitz Award Recipient Announced

Dayton, Ohio (March 26, 2019) – On Wednesday, March 27, 2019, the Montgomery County Family and Children First Council will recognize the Honorable Walter H. Rice at the 19th Annual Brother Raymond L. Fitz Award Luncheon. This prominent event will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Top of the Market in downtown Dayton.

“After almost 50 years of sentencing and resentencing the same people, and often different generations of the same family, I firmly believe that helping people successfully reenter the community after a criminal justice sentence is the only viable way to combat recidivism,” Judge Rice said.

For the past 20 years, the Family and Children First Council has reported on the progress of community indicators and initiatives that impact the lives of children and families in Montgomery County, Ohio. The Brother Raymond L. Fitz Award was instituted 19 years ago, and honors someone who exemplifies Brother Ray’s dedication to nurturing and protecting children and families by his or her daily efforts in the community.

“Judge Rice has been a stalwart supporter of families and children in Montgomery County, championing issues of reentry and fatherhood, as well as diversity and dialogue,” said Debbie Lieberman, Montgomery County Commission President. “Judge Rice believes in giving people the opportunity to recover and be restored to their families and their communities, and he has truly dedicated his entire life to this work. I cannot think of a more deserving person to receive this award.”

Judge Walter H. Rice has been a local community advocate for many years, known as a prominent federal judge, attorney, and adjunct professor. He also demonstrates community leadership and work with children, fathers and returning citizens. Judge Rice goes into Dayton elementary and middle schools to emphasize to students how important they are to the community, and to find out what he and other social servants can do to make their journeys through life smoother. He is Co-Chair of the Montgomery County Reentry Council, which focuses on helping returning citizens reintegrate into the community with dignity and committed purpose. He is an advocate for second chances, and has made a longstanding commitment of laying the foundation of reentry awareness throughout the community.

In addition to helping citizens return from incarceration, Judge Rice has a keen focus on supporting Fatherhood Initiatives. A father himself, he understands the importance fathers have on their children’s futures. He has been a keynote speaker at Celebrate Fatherhood Montgomery County for the past eight years and carries out the same role at the “We the Fathers of Montgomery County” Banquet for the past four years.

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Among Judge Rice's numerous leadership roles, the formation and spearheading of Montgomery County Federal Reentry Court is a shining example of his ability to serve the community with the help of others. Each entity commits a representative to attend monthly court sessions and provide participants with the holistic services they so desperately need as they attempt to return to society. In addition, to all of the work that we have described about the Reentry program, Judge Rice was also a founder, and driving force, for the Dayton Dialogue on Race Relations, which seeks to foster dialogue for a greater understanding between Caucasians and African Americans within our community. He was a leader of the American Veteran's Heritage Center, an independent non-profit organization located on the campus of the Dayton Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Judge Rice was also a mentor and role model to UD Law students. He was fully engaged with his students and gave generously of his time and wisdom far beyond the confines of his classroom, in particular, with the many externs from the law school that have served in his office.

19th Annual Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Ph.D. Award

The Brother Raymond L. Fitz Award honors someone who exemplifies Brother Ray's dedication to nurturing and protecting children and families by his or her daily efforts in the community. The Montgomery County Family and Children First Council serves as the lead human services collaborative addressing issues that affect children and families across the county. The Council established the award to honor Raymond L. Fitz, former President of the University of Dayton, and first Chair of the Family & Children First Council, for his years of leadership and service to the community.

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