

Bahais 66th convention opened in Wilmette

Temple's 50th year



Pays tribute to Bahai's...

President Warren Burmeister, of the Village of Wilmette, presents a resolution honoring the American Bahai community for its contribution to the spiritual life of Wilmette at a meeting in the Baha'i House of Worship marking the 50th anniversary of the election of the National Spiritual Assembly, a group of nine Baha'is elected annually to serve as the administrative body. Seated behind President Burmeister are from left, Franklin, Navajo artist; Dr.

Firuz Kazemzadeh, Yale professor; Glenford Mitchell, Jamaica-born journalist; Miss Charlotte Linfoot, formerly an administrative assistant with the Junior Red Cross; Dr. William Maxwell, association dean of education at the University of North Carolina; Miss Maydalene Carney, educational assistant at the University of Massachusetts and William Sears, one of the international stewards of the Baha'i Faith.



NSA official and delegate...

Mrs. Eleanor Lombard, left, Baha'i delegate from Georgia, congratulates Miss Magdalene Carney on her election to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States.

By BETH McKENTY
Tribute to the American Baha'i community and its contribution to the Village of Wilmette was expressed by President Warren Burmeister when he spoke at a meeting in the Baha'i House of Worship honoring the 50th anniversary of the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States. William Sears, one of the international stewards of the Baha'i Faith, came from Canada for the meeting, which opened the 66th annual convention of the Baha'is of the United States.

Baha'is from 48 states, as well as many overseas countries, gathered with distinguished citizens of Wilmette for a devotional program in the auditorium of the temple, followed by a brief meeting and reception in Foundation Hall. Highlighting the meeting was presentation of a special resolution from the Board of Trustees of Wilmette, citing the American Baha'i community for its contribution to the spiritual life of the village and for adding to the beauty of Wilmette through the House of Worship, located at Sheridan Rd. and Linden st.

Citing one definition of community as "a group of people living together in the same place under the same laws", Burmeister continued: "Tonight, it is interesting and inspiring to apply that same definition to a religious community. Here, in this beautiful House of Worship, we are aware of how the Baha'i community associates under the same laws, or covenants. Our definition suddenly takes on a much deeper meaning.

"In this community, we are very conscious of some of the values of the materialistic things we have to deal with in life. I think our accountants could tell you to the penny how much it costs to run the village or how much it costs to provide a certain service. How seldom we stop and take a spiritual census. The message I bring to you tonight, on behalf of the Village, is that we are indeed fortunate for you, the Baha'is, have given us such a great deal of spiritual wealth. When we think of that rule applied to the great teachings of the philosophers, we could conceive of this community being located not just in Wilmette but being a marvelously expansive community that begins to embrace all of mankind. So we're very grateful for the opportunity to be with you, to be moved and inspired by your presence and the fortunate presence of this House of Worship in our small corner of the earth, realizing that it links us with all mankind. Perhaps this, some day, will be the measure by which civilization will be realized."

Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, then accepted from Burmeister the following Resolution, tendered by the

Board of Trustees of Wilmette:

"Whereas the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States will celebrate its 50th birthday, April 24, 1975, in the House of Worship in Wilmette, and

"Whereas the National Spiritual Assembly and those members of the Baha'i Faith who live in the Village have been outstanding citizens and neighbors for many years.

"Therefore, be it resolved by the President and the Board of Trustees of the Village of Wilmette, Cook County, Illinois, that they extend on behalf of all the citizens of Wilmette, sincere congratulations and best wishes to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary, and be it further resolved that this Resolution be spread upon the records of the Board of Trustees of the Village and that a copy be tendered to the Assembly on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary."

In accepting the document, Dr. Kazemzadeh expressed appreciation from both the National Spiritual Assembly and the entire Baha'i community in the United States. "The Village of Wilmette," he declared, "has provided us, for a long time now, with a perfect home for our Baha'i activities. "I would also like to acknowledge the presence amongst us of two past presidents of the Village of Wilmette; William Alexander, and his wife, Mrs. Alexander; also William McKnight, and Mrs. McKnight; Other Wilmette residents who were introduced to the large gathering included: James Williams, past president of the Wilmette Historical society, and Mrs. Williams; Richard Thompson, director of the Wilmette library, and the nine members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Wilmette.

Responding to the address of Burmeister, Sears recalled some of the historic moments which accompanied the building of the House of Worship and noted its international recognition as an architectural and religious landmark.

"I have found pictures of the House of Worship in many distant corners of the earth," he declared. "In a Teso Village in Uganda where I called upon a Baha'i, one picture hung on his wall, a picture of the House of Worship, and underneath it the words, 'Wilmette, Ill. In many other countries this has been my experience, for all over the world Baha'is turn their eyes to Wilmette and hope in their lifetime to be able to visit this historic House of Worship."