

Honors go to Roy Wilkins

WILMETTE, Ill. — Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP, was the recipient of the Louis G. Gregory Award for Service to Humanity at the world-famous Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, Ill.

Given by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States through its North American Baha'i Office for Human Rights (N A BOHR), this award honors persons or organizations whose humanitarian services have contributed significantly to the rights and unity of man. Louis G. Gregory was a member of the first national administrative institution of the Baha'i Faith in the U. S. and for over four decades, worked to advance the cause of racial unity and human rights.

In presenting the award to Wilkins, Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, chairman of the Baha'i National Assembly and professor of history at Yale University, stressed the part the Baha'i Faith has played in race relations in America. He said that when 'Abdu'l-Baha, the son of the Prophet-Founder of the Baha'i Faith, Baha'u'llah, was in this country in 1912, He addressed the 4th annual convention of the NAACP and pointed out that "racial differences were ephemeral and insignificant and that man's essence lay in his being the reflection of divine qualities, virtues and perfections. The spirit and the intelligence of man is the essential . . . therefore color or race are of no importance."

Wilkins in accepting the award which was presented to him for his part in the observance of the United Nations International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and in particular for his contributions to the cause of human rights in America over many years said, "The followers of the doctrine of peace, love and amity between people are at times a lonely lot. Yet they have much about which to be thankful because as great as the odds seem, they are not as great as they once were . . . The history of this country in its slow combatting of racism is that this hard task requires the enlistment for the duration, not for the faint hearted or weak . . . but those who enjoy morsels of victory adding them to other morsels and watching things change, watching attitudes change, not from this year to the next, but from this year to 10 years from now to 20 years from now. It is worthwhile to be a member of that small band of believers whose faith never waivers and whose deeds never cease."

The program was chaired by Glenford E. Mitchell, former assistant editor of African Report and presently secretary of the National Baha'i Assembly. ~