

Beckman Receives Creighton University Graduate School Alumni Merit Award

Melvin Beckman, MA'73, received the Creighton University Graduate School Alumni Merit Award at the University's annual Alumni Weekend on Sept. 21 in Omaha.

Beckman spent the past 40 years as "a man for others," working for the imprisoned and the oppressed. In 1971 he began by organizing the Omaha Association of Clergy and Laity for Peace and the Center for the Pursuit of Peace, Omaha. Beckman then founded the Bemis Park Neighborhood Association in 1974, which initiated the Bemis Park Improvement Corporation to improve rundown and vacant properties in the area.

He continued his work by establishing the Metro Omaha Peace Association, now the national Civilian-Based Defense Association, which publishes an international newsletter focused on a nonviolent alternative for national security. In 2000, he began publishing the "Nebraska Criminal Justice Review," a newsletter to improve public understanding of the criminal justice system in Nebraska.

Beckman's work with the prison system led to his appointment as the Nebraska co-coordinator of the national campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth in 2009. He also organized and serves as president of Family and Friends of Inmates, a support group for family members of the incarcerated.

In 2010 Beckman initiated Circles of Support and Accountability, a group of interchurch ministries which implemented a program to assist sex-offenders coming out of prison to rejoin the community and avoid re-offending.