

Ralph McCloud to receive Pax Christi USA's Eileen Egan Peacemaker Award



(Pax Christi USA)

Nate Tinner-Williams

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[Ralph McCloud](#), the former director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops's [Catholic Campaign for Human Development](#) (CCHD), will receive [Pax Christi USA's](#) Eileen Egan Peacemaker Award this year. Among his other accomplishments, the move honors McCloud's decade and a half of service in the 55-year-old anti-poverty

initiative.

According to an announcement from Pax Christi, the award is bestowed periodically "to honor a group or individual who has made a strong and extraordinary prophetic witness for peace in a time or situation of devastating violence or injustice." It was most recently awarded in 2010.

McCloud, known during his time in the USCCB as the highest-ranking lay African American in the Catholic Church, resigned from his post in April. He received a farewell sendoff from his confreres in Washington in late May.

"From his days in city government in Fort Worth, Texas to his leadership role in the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) and in everything else he does, Ralph McCloud has promoted the kind of peace that is rooted in justice," said Pax Christi USA Bishop-president [John Stowe](#), OFM Conv. of Lexington.

"The CCHD is the U.S. Church's signature program for putting the values of Catholic Social Teaching into practice and under Ralph's leadership many new initiatives were funded to help impoverished communities become protagonists in improving their own futures. He was also instrumental in teaching about how the CCHD works and transforms lives."

McCloud, a Texas native, was formerly a longtime civil servant in his native Fort Worth, serving four terms on the city council and chairing the mayor's commission on homelessness. He directed the peace and justice ministry for the Diocese of Fort Worth from 1995 until his appointment to the USCCB in late 2007.

With the CCHD, McCloud led the bishops' efforts to combat poverty and promote social justice, including the distribution of thousands of grants to organizations around the country each year.

Among his many honors, he received the History Maker from the Archdiocese of Atlanta in 2009 and [Catholic Charities USA's](#) Martin Luther King Keep the Dream Alive Award in 2010. In recent years, he has served on the board of directors for the [Catholic Mobilizing Network](#), which leads efforts against the death penalty and promotes restorative justice.

"I am humbled and honored to be recognized by Pax Christi USA," said McCloud in a statement.

"I have long admired and respected their courageous and faith-filled work. In today's world, they truly represent what it means to care. Pax Christi engages people to pursue justice, embrace peace and escort one another into right relationships with God and one another. This is a tremendous honor!"

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His resignation from the USCCB came as a surprise, revealed by the conference after the fact amid reports of financial distress in the CCHD. The bishops are scheduled to meet for their annual spring plenary meeting this week, where the fate of the organization will be discussed.

Nevertheless, McCloud's achievements while leading the CCHD have not gone unnoticed by his peers and supporters, who have [continued to support](#) the mission of the organization even as it faces pressure in an increasingly divided U.S. episcopate.

"It was an easy decision for Pax Christi USA to honor Mr. McCloud for his long commitment in leading the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, guiding the Church's efforts to address poverty, to empower organizations committed to constructive social change, and to center the work of social justice in the institutional church," said Johnny Zokovitch, Pax Christi USA's outgoing executive director.

"We recognize most importantly that he has persevered in this work despite counter-prevailing winds in our Church and the larger society that have fed polarization, racism, xenophobia, and the demonization of impoverished people."

The Eileen Egan Award, named for [one of the co-founders](#) of Pax Christi USA, will be officially awarded to McCloud at a to-be-determined date. The organization says plans for an event are underway.