

AYR ALICE 'BONNIE' MAIRS PASSION AWARD

THOMAS V. SULLIVAN TRIBUTE:

Thomas Sullivan, a sea Captain and founder of the first YMCA in America (Boston) was inspired by the Y movement in Europe and brought this vision to the United States in 1855. His leadership and quest to impact community life and build the foundation of personal growth changed the face of non-profit organizations around the world. In his footsteps over the next century, many YMCA men and women across America followed Captain Sullivan's lead and ventured out into the world to share the YMCA Mission and Purpose and operational strategy to assist in the development of community, youth and family YMCA programs.

Today, the Sullivan Award will recognize a retired YMCA Director for her contributions and efforts in sharing the YMCA Community Development concept throughout the world. With the likeness of Captain Sullivan this nominee is a person of courage and vision to 'Stay the Course' and to plant the seeds of YMCA discovery and growth.

INTRODUCTION OF ALICE 'BONNIE' MAIRS:

Ralph Christian, in his nomination said, "I consider it a great pleasure and responsibility to recommend to the Reunion Recognition Committee Ms. Alice 'Bonnie' Mairs as a worthy candidate to receive the Thomas V. Sullivan Award for International Service. As President of the McBurney/Morse Chapter of AYR and as a professional colleague of Ms. Mairs for over 30 years I have known her to be a conscientious and hardworking advocate for a strong YMCA presence with respect to the International Community and World Service."

Bonnie's early contact with the YMCA began as a eight year old 'Y' camper in St. Paul, MN. This set the mold for a life-long commitment to the Y. Much later she joined the National YMCA Staff in New York and was in charge of International Student Exchange Work and the International Camp Counselor Program. With these exciting programs Bonnie exposed local YMCA's and 'Y' families to a wonderful world of cultural enrichment, global awareness and international understanding and exchange. She recruited students from Africa, Europe, Japan, South America, India, China and numerous parts of Asia and offered them work assignments in Y camps and living experiences in Y family homes. These young people often enhanced our values as they helped to foster a broader understanding and appreciation of other cultures and lifestyles. Many of these students became lifelong friends.

In her capacity as the Executive Director of the International Branch of the YMCA of Greater New York, Bonnie continued to be an extremely effective liaison between the YMCA and the International Community. This was evident as she maintained a relationship with the United Nations and its recognition of the YMCA as one of its original NGO's. She expanded the scope of her participation with

the World Council of YMCA's and continued her professional and personal efforts in support of small struggling YMCA's in depressed and or developing countries.

When a YMCA is under the threat of closure or a third world "Y" Executive has no pension or a camp needs to rebuild – they all have had a friend in Bonnie Mairs. She is one who has fought for their cause and will articulate their plight in a warm but compelling manner.

In retirement, Bonnie remains a strong supporter of YMCA World Service, EAR, Secours Specieux, the Sioux YMCA and the Japan relief efforts. She is also a very active member of the McBurney/Morse Chapter of AYR and is involved in the World Council of YMCA's and World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees. In addition Bonnie continues to lead annual study tours to Jerusalem, visiting the Holy sites of the three major religions of the Middle East.

Bonnie's life in the YMCA has been about the people she has met and the friends she has nurtured as a Y ambassador. Those friends can be found in New York, Chicago, South Dakota, California, Japan, Africa, Hong Kong, Mexico, Canada, Hawaii, India, Haiti, France, England, Germany and other world locations.

The McBurney/Morse Chapter of AYR nominates Bonnie Mairs for the Sullivan Award for the following reasons:

1. For her years of service bringing students from around the world for unique camping experiences in the USA
2. For her work to unite American families with hundreds of International students for shared cultural learning experiences through home visits and stays
3. For her creative leadership as the Executive Director of the International Branch of the YMCA of Greater New York
4. For her advocacy to sustain the YMCA as an active NGO partner within the United Nations
5. For her ongoing commitment to support depressed YMCA's around the world in various regions
6. For her outspoken support of the Sioux YMCA, Secours Speciaux and for YMCA work in developing countries around the world
7. For her 40 plus years as an inspiring active and retired YMCA leader

JOHN 17:21 AWARD STATEMENT:

In John 17:21 Jesus prays for his Disciples "THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE, FATHER! MAY THEY BE IN US JUST AS YOU ARE IN ME AND I AM IN YOU. MAY THEY BE ONE, SO THAT THE WORLD WILL BELIEVE YOU SENT ME!" It is this application of unselfish giving and oneness for all humanity that was instilled in the Disciples that is also found in Bonnie Mairs who has given of herself for the betterment of our movement, her community and for humanity.

We wish to recognize this INTREPID hero from our YMCA family who has not only excelled in her career but also in her retirement and has made significant accomplishments in developing, supporting and communicating her passion for others.

In summary, Alice 'Bonnie' Mairs has STAYED THE COURSE and has followed the vision of Captain Thomas V. Sullivan – “To venture out into the world to share the YMCA mission and purpose and to assist in the development of community, youth and family programs”. In other words “TO BE ONE WITH THE FATHER” this is the inherent vision of early YMCA leaders such as Thomas Sullivan and has been the inherent vision of Bonnie Mairs.

RECOGNITION OF ALICE 'BONNIE' MAIRS:

Recounting the lyrics of our Praise Song “I REFUSE” – TO SIT AROUND AND WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO DO WHAT GOD HAS CALLED ME TO DO MYSELF, OH, I COULD CHOOSE NOT TO MOVE BUT – I REFUSE!!

Bonnie Mairs has always REFUSED not to move and TO FOLLOW THROUGH AND DO WHAT BONNIE WAS MADE TO DO!

It is my privilege to ask Bonnie Mairs to stand and receive the AYR Reunion 2011 John 17:21 Passion Award in recognition of her application of unselfish giving and oneness for humanity.