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The University of Dayton

News Release

UD PRESENTS NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AWARD TO GLOBAL MASS MEDIA MINISTER

DAYTON, Ohio, June 1, 1990--The Rev. Miles O'Brien Riley, who logged enough miles to travel around the world two-and-a-half times in a yearlong "spiritual pilgrimage" to teach others how to "evangelize through the media," will receive the University of Dayton's fourth annual Daniel J. Kane Religious Communications Award on June 21.

Named after the former director of communications for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the first recipient in 1986, the national award honors persons who have made significant contributions to religious communications in the United States.

"What's really significant is Father Miles' global perspective on communications," said Sister Angela Ann Zukowski, M.H.S.H., executive director of UD's Center for Religious Telecommunications and president of Unda-USA, a 500-member national organization of Catholic communicators. "He has gone around the world educating bishops, seminarians and lay people about how to use communications effectively."

In 1988, Riley took a sabbatical from his job as director of communications for the Archdiocese of San Francisco, which he held for 18 years, to visit 47 countries from Latin America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania "to learn what others around the world are doing to evangelize through the media." He taught how-to workshops on training spokespersons, using the media and producing television and radio programs. Along the way, he was arrested three times on three continents and received a marriage proposal. Each Sunday during his marathon journey, CBS aired a segment called "Miles to Go," which Riley describes as a "parable report." Currently, he's writing a book, Promises to Keep, that's filled with anecdotal profiles of people he met on the journey and creative methods of communicating the Gospel message--from the traditional dances of Africa to the comic books of the Philippines.

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"My perception from this journey is that most of the world is in a prison--in prisons of hunger, injustice, ignorance, indifference, fear, hopelessness and helplessness," he said in a telephone interview from San Francisco. "And the way out is through communication."

Riley's main ministry has been the mass media. He has written five musical comedies, nine books and hundreds of articles and reviews. In addition, he has produced and hosted eight films and more than 1,000 television and 3,000 radio programs--some of which have been syndicated throughout the United States and Canada. The San Francisco Chronicle has dubbed him "the Great Communicator."

Riley has received dozens of awards, including 10 National Gabriel Awards for outstanding TV productions. He has served as vice president of Unda-USA, governor of the Northern California Academy of Arts and Sciences and trustee of the National Academy of TV Arts and Sciences. Riley is listed in Who's Who in Religion in the United States, Who's Who in the Catholic Church in the United States and Who's Who in America.

Born and raised in South Bend, Ind., Riley graduated from St. Joseph's College in 1958, St. Patrick's Seminary in 1960 and the Gregorian University and North American College in Rome in 1964.

For the past year, Riley has lived at the College at Notre Dame at St. Patrick's Seminary and conducted hundreds of workshops in public relations for parishes and agencies in the Archdiocese of San Francisco. He will be part of the faculty for the June 17-29 Pastoral Communications Institute sponsored by UD's Center for Religious Telecommunications.

Past recipients of the Daniel J. Kane Award include Dale Francis, a national columnist; Sister M. Irene Fugazy, administrative director of instructional television for the Archdiocese of New York; the Rev. Ellwood Kieser, executive director of Paulist Communications in California; and Daniel Kane. In addition to receiving a three-dimensional original wall sculpture, Riley will be honored by a donation in his name to a scholarship fund for students participating in the Pastoral Communications Institute.

The University of Dayton is a private, co-educational school founded and sponsored by the Society of Mary (Marianists), a Roman Catholic teaching order. UD is the largest independent university in Ohio and the eighth largest Catholic university in the nation.