

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2011

Founders of Faith Elementary School to Receive Award

David & Oclivery Jones Selected First Recipients of William J. & Rev. Shirley M. Smith, Sr. Spirit Award

Dover, DE – David and Oclivery Jones, Founders of Faith Elementary School (www.feschool.org) located in Dover, will receive the William J. & Rev. Shirley M. Smith, Sr. Spirit Award on Friday, May 20, 2011 at 7 p.m. at the Inspired to BE Smith Legacy Dinner being held at the Rollins Center at Dover Downs. CBS 60 Minutes Correspondent Byron Pitts is the keynote speaker. Comcast Network Arthur Fennell of Art Fennell Reports is the master of ceremonies.

The Joneses have been educators in Delaware for more than 30 years. Former teachers in the Caesar Rodney School District for seven years, Mr. Jones also taught in the Milford School District prior to the husband and wife team opening the doors of Faith Elementary School in 1981. The non-denominational Christian school was established to help students who were struggling academically and/or behaviorally. In addition, to meet the needs of parents who were looking for an environment that provided a strong academic foundation and emphasized good school citizenship.

After witnessing several groups of young black males' in Ohio and Delaware who were evidently yearning for more discipline, focus and love, Mr. Jones, a Vietnam veteran, began looking for a solution. Although a gifted teacher himself, Mr. Jones says, "Oclivery has a special gift for teaching some of the most difficult students." Believing that every student can learn, Mrs. Jones' secret is to make sure that every student feels special by nurturing them with love, discipline and patience." Together, they have educated more than 1300 students over the course of Faith's Elementary School 29-year history. "I have seen these two people make huge sacrifices just to keep the school's doors open," says Caroline Stanley a former board member. "When my granddaughter was getting out of control in the public school setting, we took her to the Joneses because we knew they could help her. They are two people committed to educating our children."

Today, Faith alumni serve throughout the US in various capacities. Most of the alumni have continued their education, graduating with honors from schools such as the US Naval Academy and Hampton University. Terrence "TC" Nichols who attended Faith from pre-school through the eighth grade says, "They groomed us. They got involved in our personal lives. They wanted to ensure that our confidence was high. As African Americans we aren't always represented well in the media, they taught us that whether we were going to the White House or to the grocery store we have to represent ourselves and represent ourselves well." TC attended Columbia Union College now Washington Adventist University. He is a Computer Graphics Manager.

"This award is given to people whose lives parallel that of my parents, William J. and Rev. Shirley Smith, Sr.," says S. Renee, chair of the board of the William J. & Rev. Shirley M. Smith Scholarship Fund. The board looks for gems in the community whose lives reflect faith, perseverance and integrity while bringing great value to the lives of others and to this community. "It may be an honor for them to receive this award, but it is a gift not only to them, but to ourselves to encourage, uplift and give others an opportunity to shine," says S. Renee. That's what Inspired to BE Smith Legacy is all about.

In addition to celebrating the Joneses' contribution to the community, a 3-year renewable \$1000 scholarship to a deserving second year DSU student is also being presented.

Tickets to the Inspired to BE Smith Legacy Dinner is \$50 per person; \$25 of the donation will be tax deductible. Tickets may be purchased by sending a check payable to the Delaware Community Foundation (memo line to Wm/Shirley Smith, Sr. Sch. Fund), William J. & Rev. Shirley M. Smith, Sr. Scholarship Fund, c/o: S. Renee, P.O. Box 177, Dover, DE 19903. Or on the Delaware Community Foundation's website at <http://www.delcf.org/>. For additional information, please call S. Renee at 302.736.5131.

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