

## **CCNY Honors Dr. Eugene S. Callender, Civil Rights Leader And Minister, With Special Presentation Of President's Medal**

January 24th, 2006 | City College

NEW YORK, January 23, 2006 — Dr. Gregory H. Williams, President of The City College of New York (CCNY), tonight bestowed The College's President's Medal on Dr. Eugene S. Callender, long-time community and civil rights leader and pastor of St. James Presbyterian Church in Harlem. The award presentation was made at a reception in The Great Hall of The City College honoring of Dr. Callender's 80th birthday. The reception was co-hosted by Rep. Charles B. Rangel.

"Dr. Callender is one of the nation's most prominent living civil rights and community leaders," said President Williams. "His work has improved the lives of countless people here in Harlem, across the country and around the world."

President Williams noted that CCNY is an active participant in the St. James Partnership, a social action initiative headed by Dr. Callender that helps Harlem youth prepare for future success through education. The recently established Harlem 40 program has several dozen CCNY students mentoring seventh graders from the Harlem community. In addition, CCNY supports the Harlem 50 project, which helps college and high school dropouts resume their education.

For more than 55 years, Dr. Callender has been a minister, community activist, social worker, political and civil rights leader and educator in the Harlem community. From a ministry he established in the 1950s, he began one of the country's first community-based clinics for treating heroin addicts, at a time when the drug had become a scourge in Harlem. He also led Harlem's first rent strike and organized the first Harlem Freedom School with attorney Paul Zuber.

From 1959 to 1983, he served as senior minister of the Church of the Master. During this time, he was responsible for the creation of HARYOU-ACT, which was the first and largest anti-poverty agency in the United States, and served as executive director of the New York Urban League. He also established the Street Academy Program, a program for high school dropouts that became a national model, and Harlem Prep, a special school for Street Academy graduates that prepared them to enter college.

Dr. Callender has served on presidential commissions under five Presidents: Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. In addition, he was Commissioner of the New York State Office for the Aging

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under former Gov. Mario Cuomo from 1983 to 1989 and a member of the state parole board from 1989 to 1991.

Since 2002, he has been pastor at St. James Presbyterian Church, which is located on St. Nicholas Avenue, just north of The City College campus. The church, which was founded in 1895, is the oldest African-American Presbyterian Church in Manhattan. He also is Chairman of the Board of the National Black Theater of Harlem, a senior advisor to the Global Board of Directors of the Hunger Project and a member of the Democratic National Committee.

A native of Cambridge, Mass., Dr. Callender holds: a B.A. from Boston University; a Master of Divinity degree from Westminster Theological Seminary, cum laude; a Doctor of Divinity from Knoxville College, and a Juris Doctor from New York Law School. He has taught at Columbia University, The New School for Social Research and CUNY York College.

#### About The City College of New York

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