



THE 2016 MARIE INTERFAITH
CIVIC LEADERSHIP AWARD

William McCastlain and Steven, Cindi and Ariel Blackwood will receive the 2016 Marie Interfaith Civic Leadership Awards for their work in suicide prevention and awareness at 2 p.m. Sept. 25 at Temple B’Nai Israel, 3700 N. Rodney Parham Road, Little Rock.

The public is invited to RSVP to www.themarie.com; there is no charge to attend the event. At the event a panel discussing “Teens and Young Adult Suicide Prevention – Bringing Hope” will be moderated by Greg Adams, LCSW, ACSW, Program Coordinator of the Center for Good Mourning and Staff Bereavement Support at Arkansas Children's Hospital. Participants are Christopher Epperson, Board Chair for the Arkansas Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; McCastlain; and the Blackwoods.

Suicide among young adults and teens is a silent epidemic in our state, one that has affected both the Blackwood and McCastlain families. It is the third leading cause of death for Arkansans 15-24 and the fifth leading cause of death for those 10-14. The most common method of teen suicide is firearms. Beyond death statistics, in 2000, one in 12 Arkansas teens attempted suicide and one in five contemplated it.

The Marie Awards wants to make the public aware of the most important risk factors for suicides:

- Previous suicide attempts.
- History of depression or other mental illness.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Family history of suicide or violence.
- Physical illness.
- Feeling alone.

In 2004, Paul and Irving Spitzberg initiated the Marie Interfaith Civic Leadership Award an award to honor their mother, the late Marie Spitzberg. Growing up, they saw a positive role model in her values and civic activities in partnership with their father, Dr. Irving Spitzberg. Marie Spitzberg lived interfaith leadership in her service to all regardless of religion or economic circumstance.

The award, now in its 12th year, recognizes leaders from different faiths and different segments of the community who address important issues and problems facing Arkansas and our nation. It represents Marie Spitzberg’s lifelong willingness to speak her mind and stand up for what she believed.

Past recipients of the Marie Interfaith Civic Leadership Award include Mimi Dortch, 2005; Jim Davis, 2006; Grainger Williams, 2007; the congregations of Bethel AME Church and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 2008; former U.S. Senator David Pryor, 2009; Arkansas Sen. Joyce Elliott, 2010; Dr. Fitz Hill, 2011; Curt Bradbury and Kirk Lane, 2012; Rotary Club District 6150, Sam Chaffin and Gary Speed, 2013; Rev. Stephen Copley, 2014, and Amy Dunn Johnson, J.D., and Vince Morris, J.D., 2015.