

The Reverend Doctor Walter J. Smith of the Society of Jesus

Walter, this evening we honor you for your vision and leadership in helping HealthCare Chaplaincy achieve its mission and purposes during the past eighteen years.

The Chaplaincy is forever grateful to the Society of Jesus, which has encouraged you to lend your mind and heart to this multifaith work for nearly two decades. And we are grateful to you for accepting these responsibilities with such generosity and commitment.

You inherited a small but strong organization with a clear mission and a forward-thinking plan for growth. During the time of your leadership, you have led the organization through the development and implementation of five successive strategic plans. Many of the 140 trustees with whom you have worked view you as a social entrepreneur, keenly able to see opportunities and find ways to encourage the Chaplaincy to make a difference. And you have done that and more.

Your ministry as priest, teacher and counselor has reached well beyond the boundaries of your Roman Catholic faith. You quickly embraced the role of religious leader and have been effectively caring for the soul of this great city in all of its diverse people and needs. People call you “Rabbi” as easily as they call you “Father.”

But most importantly, you have with a purity of purpose led the HealthCare Chaplaincy to its current place of prominence as a national nonprofit leader in the research, education and evidence-based practice of spiritually-centered health care.

Walter: the term “Renaissance Man” defines who you are. You are equally at home reading a balance sheet as you are quoting from an ancient philosopher. You are an accomplished musician and a European-trained cook. You coached young athletes in swimming, chaired a university psychology department, and led a graduate theological school. You read ancient literature in languages long forgotten and despite your birth in Boston, you unapologetically root for the World Champion New York Yankees.

Walter: I join this evening with your Board of Trustees in echoing the words of your mentor, Dr Charles Hersch, who trained you as a clinical psychologist during your internship in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Dr. Hersch wrote recently: *“Let us not focus only on the magnitude of what you have created, but on the significance of it: a remarkable blending of your two professions, the pastoral and the clinical. The measure of your energy combined with the measure of your mind stand alone.”*

For all these reasons, we proudly honor you this evening, Father Walter Smith, with the Wholeness of Life Award.