

Rabbi Barry Marks named State Journal-Register First Citizen



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Rabbi Barry Marks, 2011 State Journal-Register First Citizen Award winner

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Rabbi Barry Marks, a founder of the Greater Springfield Interfaith Association and an advocate and volunteer for numerous local organizations serving children, the sick and the disadvantaged, received the 2011 State Journal-Register First Citizen Award this morning.

Marks, 68, a Springfield resident and spiritual leader of Temple Israel, was presented the award during a breakfast ceremony at the Presidential Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center.

The award is given annually to a Springfield-area resident whose contributions to the community exceeded what his or her job required.

“Rabbi Marks stood out as an individual who has touched many lives during the more than 30 years he has been a part of Springfield community,” said Cindy Davidsmeyer, chairwoman of this year’s First Citizen Board.

Marks is president of the interfaith association, which has promoted social justice and racial and religious harmony since the mid-1970s. He has served on a variety of local boards connected with organizations that include the Girl Scouts of Central Illinois, St. John’s Hospital, Memorial Medical Center, St. John’s Breadline, United Way and the Simmons Cancer Institute.

Marks, who was born and raised in Baltimore, is the 49th recipient of the annual recognition.

He was among five finalists named by the First Citizen Board. The other finalists were Polly Roesch, 100, a former secretary, singer and gardener; Jill Egizii, 49, a full-time volunteer and alderman in the city of Leland Grove; Robert Moore, 68, a retired U.S. marshal; and Paul O'Shea, 72, planning and design coordinator for the city of Springfield.

"Many fine candidates were nominated with a variety of backgrounds and attributes," said Davidsmeyer, director of community support at Simmons Cancer Institute at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.