

In Memoriam

Eddie Mae Ward 1936-2019



Former HFP Director Eddie Mae Ward died December 13, 2019, in a Muskegon hospital. She was 83. Eddie Mae served on our board from 2009 to 2011, but had been and remained until the day of her death a staunch supporter of all that we do. One of her sons was in prison. One of her best friends was in prison. Eddie Mae had a heart for prisoners. She and her husband were pillars of the community in the city of Muskegon Heights. Her husband was an elementary school principal...she was a teacher. She will be missed.

"A beam in darkness: let it grow."
— Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam*

Grants assist HFP

Loutit Foundation

The Loutit Foundation, a component fund of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, has awarded a \$23,000 grant to Humanity for Prisoners. The announcement was made by Foundation President Jon Eshleman. HFP President Matt Tjapkes expressed sincere thanks on behalf of his board of directors for the grant, which represents one annual payment on the organization's land contract. "It's more than just a grant," said Tjapkes. "It underscores the importance of our work in the State of Michigan, and the impact we are making in its prison system."

The Loutit Foundation is known for its assistance to community projects.

Grand Haven Area Community Foundation

Humanity for Prisoners has received a \$4,000 grant from the Technical Assistance Fund of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation. Holly Cole, Vice President of Grants and Program for GHACF said the gift is designated to exclusively support the implementation of a donor management system. Russ Bloem, Board Chairman for HFP, said a DMS was critically needed for the agency's sustained growth. He said the office team is now handling approximately 1,000 messages from prisoners or their representatives per month.

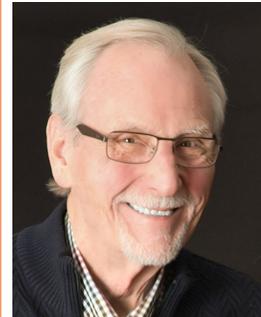


Grand Haven Area
community foundationSM

From the desk of Doug:

Black History Month: We can do better!

When February rolls around every year, I keep thinking that we should do more about Black History Month in our news-



letter. But each February we have so much news to share! And so little space in which to tell it. So today,

at least, I devote this column to the observance of Black History Month.

Our space is limited, so I must be brief. After reviewing a series of reports, I can relay this shocking information:

-People of color are overrepresented in solitary confinement compared to the general prison population,

-Black youth are disproportionately sent to adult court by judges

-Falsely convicted black murder suspects spent more years in prison before they were released

-African Americans are incarcerated in state prisons at a rate that is 5.1 times the imprisonment of whites

-In Michigan, more than half of the prison population is black (the black population in the state is less than 14%).

Based on much available data, this conclusion is inescapable: **Racial disparity permeates every stage of the United States criminal justice system, from arrest to trial to sentencing to post prison experiences!**

Dr. Martin Luther King said, "Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, 'Wait.'"

The African American population has waited long enough. Our so-called system of justice can do better. As we observe Black History Month, may that be our resolve.



Jim Wallis Date Set

Tuesday, October 13, is the date for the 2020 HFP Community Read event. Our guest speaker will be James E. Wallis Jr., an American theologian, writer, teacher and political activist. He is best known as the founder and editor of Sojourners magazine and as the founder of the Washington, D.C.-based Christian community of the same name. Wallis is well known for his advocacy on issues of peace and social justice. He's the author of numerous books, including America's Original Sin.

Clients call for Clemency Council reinstatement

A group of Humanity for Prisoners clients say the time is right for Michigan's new Governor and Attorney General to reinstate a clemency council. Governor Granholm formed such a council in 2007 (see the Executive Order [HERE](#)) to assist the Parole Board. Thanks to that council's work 168 prisoners received clemency...37 of them serving life without parole. Governor Granholm's successor, Gov. Rick Snyder, dissolved the council. Our clients say that legislative changes are certainly possible, but it's a slow process. Governor Granholm made the move by executive order. It involved 7 volunteers from a cross section of society. In other words, it happened in a hurry and didn't cost the state anything.

One client, who is serving a life sentence, says: "I think a united effort should be undertaken by all prison and sentencing reform groups to reinstate the council."

"For there are many people who can do big things, but there are very few people who will do the small things."

Mother Teresa

Donate: Humanityforprisoners.org

Take time to read

As a young broadcast journalist, HFP founder Doug Tjapkes won one of the state's most prestigious awards and one of the nation's highest awards for his radio editorials. Decades later, he's still writing 3-minute editorials, and you can read them on the HFP blog site: www.humanityforprisoners.blogspot.com. Says one reader: ***As a prison wife who frequently takes blows from the system and struggles to old her head up, just knowing you are fighting alongside, a friend in the dark, gives me strength to keep going. I am grateful!*** Pastor Nate uses an app to notify him whenever Doug posts something. A free version can be found at www.feedly.com. 100 of the most popular columns written over the years have been published in a new book **HUMANITY FOR PRISONERS?**

Humanity for Prisoners?

A collection of challenging and sometimes outspoken perspectives from the pen of the HFP founder, a proven champion for the humane treatment of the incarcerated



Foreword by Marla Mitchell-Cichon,
Professor of Law and Director of the Western
Michigan University Center for Law School
Innocence Project and 2016 Champion of
Justice, State Bar of Michigan

By Doug Tjapkes

A piano in your future?

A fine, European-made grand piano has been donated to HFP. It's a 6' Schimmel International Series Grand Piano, 1182 - ebony high gloss, and it's in mint condition! It was originally sold by our own Doug Tjapkes 20 years ago when he was a purveyor of institutional musical instruments. It has been tuned annually, but rarely played. List price on that instrument today would be in the \$50,000 range. HFP is accepting serious offers. This is a rare opportunity to purchase an exceptional instrument, and help support the work of HFP!

