

# *Celebrating 30 years!!!*

**HARTFORD MARRIOTT - 200 Columbus Blvd - Hartford, CT**

[www.ccfiu.org](http://www.ccfiu.org)

**Monday, November 18, 2024**

**5:30p.m.**

## 5th *Love* Your Neighbor Dinner



**HONORING FORMER & CURRENT CCIU BOARD MEMBERS FOR THEIR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP AND EXTENSIVE SERVICE TO CCIU AND THE STATEWIDE INTERRELIGIOUS COMMUNITY**

*Anne Allewa*  
Baha'i Faith

*Dr. Shyamala Raman*  
Hinduism

*Dr. Faquir Jain*  
Jainism

*Rev. Peter Grandy*  
Christianity

*Aida Mansoor*  
Islam

*Jim Friedman*  
Judaism

## **GUEST SPEAKER: PROFESSOR FRANK HARRIS**

**CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM OF SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY  
AND FORMER COLUMNIST FOR THE HARTFORD COURANT**

## Frank Harris, III



Frank Harris III is a journalism professor, author, documentary filmmaker, and former newspaper columnist.

As a university professor, he has taught journalism at Southern Connecticut State University for more than 30 years with courses covering reporting and writing, American journalism history, the First Amendment, race and the news, as well as digital journalism.

As an author, his books include, *The Craft of Quoting* and he co-authored *The Power of Free Expression in America*.

As a filmmaker, his documentary films have addressed such topics as the n-word (*Journey to the Bottom of the n-word*), the challenges of a wounded Vietnam veteran (*The First Casualty of Lake County*), and the 400th anniversary of the first enslaved Africans brought to America (*They Came Across the Water*).

As a newspaper columnist, he wrote for the *Hartford Courant* for nearly 15 years following 10 years as a columnist for the *New Haven Register*, covering topics on race, politics, and life. In addition to these publications, his writing has appeared in newspapers and magazines across the country, including the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The City Sun*, *Essence*, and *Crisis Magazine*.

Originally from Waukegan, Ill, Harris earned his graduate degree at the University of Texas and his undergraduate degree at Southern Illinois University. He lives in Hamden, Connecticut.

## Rick Hathaway



The Board of Directors of the Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding (CCIU) is pleased to announce the appointment of Rick Hathaway as its incoming Executive Director.

Rick Hathaway comes into this role with more than 30 years of organizational development experience across some 50+ countries spanning Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. He is completing 17 years as area vice president for Habitat for Humanity

in Asia-Pacific and most recently as area vice president covering Europe and the Middle East. In his career he has led significant development programs in the areas of housing construction, advocacy, and finance as well as youth development and volunteer engagement. He has served on the board of directors of non-profit organizations across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Rick is a native of New England and he and his wife Wan Sook are relocating to Connecticut where he has strong family roots. Prior to joining Habitat for Humanity, Rick worked as a design engineer for GE Aircraft Engines in Massachusetts. He received his MBA in International Economic Development from Eastern University, and Master of Science in Urban Development from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia. Rick completed his Doctorate in Organizational Development at Northeastern University and was awarded the 2024 NE University outstanding doctorate in community impact. The leadership of CCIU is pleased to welcome Rick into this role as the organization looks to expand its impact across the state of Connecticut.

# **Order of Program**

**Pre-dinner fellowship**

**Welcome by Rev. Dr. Alvan N. Johnson, Jr.**

**Prayers by Representatives of:**

**Baha'i Faith**

**Buddhism**

**Christianity**

**Hinduism**

**Islam**

**Jainism**

**Judaism**

**Sikhism**

**Unitarian Universalism**

**Presenting of the Honorees**

**Dinner is Served**

**Rev. Dr. Schmitt: CCIU's Mission and 30th Anniversary**

**Rev. Dr. Johnson introduction of Rick Hathaway**

**Rick Hathaway introduction of Frank Harris, III**

**2024 "Love Your Neighbor" Keynote Address by:  
Professor Frank Harris, III**

**Dessert & Table Conversations**

**Closing Remarks**

**Closing Meditation**



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## **Anne Alleva**

Anne Alleva was born in Fort Worth, Texas and moved to Washington, DC to study music at Catholic University, before working on graduate degrees in music and education at CCSU and the University of Hartford. While at Catholic U, she became acquainted with the Baha'i Faith and began a lifelong study of the Faith which has informed her personal, professional and spiritual aspirations.

Education has been Anne's vocation and avocation. For Anne, music is a ladder for the soul to reach a truer and higher place. She has taught music on every level for the past forty years, from preschool to grad school - at American University, the University of Hartford, the Windsor Public Schools and at the CREC Ana Grace Academy of the Arts.

She served as music director of the Connecticut Baha'i Chorale for twenty years. Anne has sung with numerous Baha'i choirs in the U.S. and in Europe. She is looking forward to singing in the Chorus this year at Carnegie Hall's performance of "The Messiah."

Anne retired from teaching music in the public school system in 2022 and continues to volunteer each week, working with the orchestra students at the Ana Grace Academy. She now teaches yoga, offering the physical, emotional and spiritual healing it can offer to her classes at Samadhi Yoga Studio in Manchester and at the South Windsor Senior Center.

Anne has served the Baha'i Faith through teaching children's classes, adult spiritual education classes, leading devotional gatherings and serving on the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Windsor. She has served on numerous committees of the Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding and organized programs to educate people about the unity and diversity of our rich religious traditions. Anne has also served as Co-Chair and Secretary for CCIU. She lives with her husband, daughter and cat in Windsor, Connecticut.



## **Rev. Peter Grandy**

Hello, I'm Peter Grandy, and I've been asked to share a brief biography. I was born 79 years ago in a suburb outside of Philadelphia. My mom and dad were both chemists, so I majored in organic chemistry at Juniata College in PA. There I met my future wife, Jeanne, who said she always wanted to marry a minister; so I went to Divinity School at Andover Newton, where I earned my M.Div.

I then went to Hartford Seminary to work on a master's degree in History of Religions with a concentration in Islamic Studies. During that time I was called to be the Associate Minister at Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford. There I had varied responsibilities – from preaching to youth and adult education, outreach into the community, and, of course, many other pastoral duties. I also learned that the true secret to being a good pastor was merely to “love your congregation.” Sound familiar?

In 2003 I was invited to join CCIU where I served 3 years as co-chair and 10 as chair of the program committee. We always had a great committee, creative and willing to work. My favorite program was our first: An “Interreligious Concert: A Celebration of the Sacred in Song, Dance, Recitation and Chant,” with each of our nine traditions presenting an offering. From there we came up with many other programs including these wonderful “Love Your Neighbor Dinners.”

I retired from AHCC and CCIU in 2013 and moved to Holliston, MA, to be near our daughter and her family. There I also share an art studio with my daughter where she paints and I teach stained glass. In 2022 we were featured on Chronicle.

I wish to close by saying how much I valued my short time with my many CCIU friends, how much I miss you, and how privileged I feel to be honored for my brief and humble years in your midst, sharing with others the treasures of our varied religious traditions.





## **Dr. Shyamala Raman**

Dr. Shyamala Raman is Professor Emerita of Economics and International Studies at the University of Saint Joseph. She joined the faculty in September 1983 and retired in May 2016. Her classes stressed that women should be aware of economic issues, have multiple perspectives, and develop a critical literacy – she introduced the “concept of complexity” in global issues. “At any moment, women should be in the driver’s seat,” she stressed, raising consciousness and demonstrating the impact of women on the economy, and vice versa. “My responsibility is to constantly seek new ways to engage students.” Dr. Raman designed a new major in International Studies, was the Founding Director of the Office of International Studies and Programs and established a Study Abroad program.

Dr. Raman served as an Honorary Director of the Board of the World Affairs Council of Connecticut. She also served on the Advisory Board of Mercy Community Health. In 1983, Dr. Raman founded the first South Asian women’s organization in the United States—SNEHA, Inc. She is a passionate member of Volunteers in Service to Education in India. Dr. Shyamala Raman was inducted into the Immigrant Heritage Hall of Fame on October 12, 2023.

She is a founding member of the Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding (CCIU) Dr. Raman has served on its Board since its founding thirty years ago. Dr. Raman served as Co-Chair of CCIU for many years - planning and participating on multi-faith panel discussions, organizing and preparing the Interfaith Film Series with the Wadsworth Atheneum, researching and disseminating a multi-faith calendar of Holy Days and celebrations, planning and participating in World Religion Day celebrations, Race Amity Day celebrations and Martin Luther King Day celebrations, to name but a few of her achievements.

Her contributions to interreligious understanding are consequential and enduring.



## **Aida Mansoor**

**Aida Mansoor is the Director of Field Education at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace working with students in the Peacebuilding and Chaplaincy Graduate Programs.**

**She also serves in the community and works with the Islamic Association of Greater Hartford and the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut leading the community service committee.**

**Aida has served for many years on the Board of Directors for the Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding (CCIU) and in that capacity, she has worked to break down barriers of fear and mistrust through community dialogues “Honest Conversations with Muslim Neighbors.”**

**Aida Mansoor has been doing presentations on “Understanding Islam and Muslims”, “Understanding Islam and the Muslim Patient” and “Women in Islam” since 1999. She is committed to building bridges of understanding and was President of the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut 2011-2015 which is a non-profit dedicated to this purpose.**

**As a community chaplain in the Greater Hartford Area, she works on various projects including one on Domestic Violence awareness and another on burial and funeral preparations.**

**She has been awarded the Human Relations Award from the National Conference for Community and Justice in 2011, the Women of Distinction Award from the Hartford Courant in 2019 and was inducted to the Immigrant Heritage Hall of Fame in 2022.**

**She also works with Muslim women on health and wellness projects and has initiated swimming programs especially for Muslim women.**



## **Dr. Faquir Jain**

Faquir Jain joined CCIU in 2002 during the term of Rev. Sidorak, who was Chairman of the Board, at the time.

For many years, Faquir Jain served as the treasurer, along with serving on educational committees, strategic planning and By-Laws committee. Faquir served as Chair/Co-chair for three terms between 2011-2013. First CCIU Executive Director (Rev. Terry Schmitt) was appointed during his chairmanship.

During his term as chair/co-chair, Faquir worked on inviting High School students from the Greater Hartford Schools including Magnet schools to AHCC in order to expose them to various philosophies represented by CCIU. CCIU provides the opportunity to learn about other faiths and search for common ground. LYN/KYN is one event, which brings everyone together. LYN/KYN is close to Jainism basic principle that "Living beings serve each other".

Dr. Jain states: "I am pleased to be in the company of other outstanding honorees with whom I have had the pleasure of working with to promote CCIU's Mission."

Dr. Jain teaches Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Biomedical Engineering at UConn. His research interests include the design and fabrication of microelectronic/optoelectronic devices and ICs, multiple quantum well light valves/modulators and SLMs, acoustic optic and electro optic modulator structures, blue green semi-conductor lasers, optoelectronically triggered lasers, modeling of MOS gate SiGe MODFETS, transport in quantum wires and dots. These research interests have resulted in the publication of numerous articles in professional journals. Currently, Faquir is a faculty advisor to BAPS, a Hindu Student organization. He has also been the faculty advisor to Jain Student Association, as well as SPIE (International Society of Optics and Photonics) and UConn Student Chapter.

Faquir hopes to continue the advocacy of CCIU into the future.





## Jim Friedman

Jim Friedman, a native of Cincinnati, earned undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Michigan and a master's degree in City Planning from the University of Pennsylvania. In his early career he worked in community planning and development in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Waterbury, and Hartford. Thereafter, he had his own business in Human Resources and concluded his professional career in synagogue administration in several Reform and Conservative synagogues.

Jim has been actively engaged in the mission of CCIU for the past 29 years after Rev. Richard Griffis, CCIU's founder, invited him to join the Board. He initiated an eight-year effort to secure funding from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, which proved successful in 2012 and enabled CCIU to (1) hire a part-time Executive Director and (2) initiate a program of helping public high school Social Studies teachers teach about religion, guided by Professor Diane Moore of Harvard Divinity School.

He convened two Muslim and three Christian friends to push back against Islamophobia. They created "Honest Conversations with Muslim Neighbors", and over four years 50 Conversations were held throughout Connecticut, in churches, synagogues, other places of worship, public libraries and colleges, informing several thousand people about what Islam is and is not. In turn, this led to Conversations about other CCIU religions, entitled "To Love Your Neighbor, Know Your Neighbor". Together with Rev. Peter Grandy, Jim Co-Chaired CCIU and they developed a variety of programs and activities that included a series of Love Thy Neighbor Dinners that featured multiple speakers, drew large numbers of attendees and raised significant funds to support CCIU.

Jim has said that "these past 29 years as a CCIU Board member have been inspiring, informative and meaningful for they have brought me into close relationship with friends from different religions and have enhanced my overall Jewish experience."

# **CCIU Board Members**

## **Co-Chairs**

Rev. Dr. Alvan N. Johnson, Jr.  
Terry Robinson

## **Secretary**

Anne Alleva

## **Treasurer**

Greg Dupuis

## **Executive Director**

Rick Hathaway

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# Friends of CCIU

CCIU is grateful for the financial support of generous individuals and institutions as we develop impactful programs for the future

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# CONNECTICUT COUNCIL INTERRELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING MISSION - VISION - HISTORY

CCIU promotes public awareness, understanding about, and respect for, Connecticut's religious pluralism through an array of programs and initiatives.

CCIU's principal focus is on educating youth and adults about the world's religions, the values they share in common, and their differences, and how they have contributed to our respective world views and identities.

We welcome and celebrate the increasing religious diversity in Connecticut and the United States.

We promote interfaith dialogue and understanding in order to achieve mutual respect, justice, and peace.

**When we understand each other more.....we hurt each other less.**

The Connecticut Committee for Interreligious Understanding (CCIU) was founded in 1994 to organize a program and worship service in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. The Committee continued to exist because the participants at that event enthusiastically endorsed the idea of ongoing dialogue and cooperation to provide an effective public voice on issues of interreligious concern.

Encouraged by a second successful conference in 1997 and another in 1998, the Committee continued to speak out and provide resources and speakers to religious communities, schools, and community organizations.

The Committee was renamed the Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding in 2003, when it was incorporated and received a 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS.

Since then, CCIU has continued to expand its program offerings, reaching increasing numbers of people throughout Connecticut through a variety of activities, programs, and events.

Today, our work is more important than ever. In the face of growing prejudice, especially Islamophobia and antisemitism, we continue to build a community that fosters interreligious understanding and acts against ignorance, fear, hatred and violence.

We believe it is vitally important for us to learn about all religions, to understand them and to respect the fact that, depending upon the circumstances and place of one's birth, family and culture, we have come naturally to accept and embrace different views and practices.

We believe each of the world's religions, as well as thoughtful and caring non-believers, espouse peace, understanding, compassion, love, respect for human dignity and the well-being of humanity.

We believe it is critical that we engage with open minds and hearts in the process of learning about all religions so that we can advance respect, understanding, compassion, and inter-group peace.

We believe that ignorance leads to stereotyping which is destructive to and inconsistent with these values.

We believe it is especially important to educate our children in primary and secondary schools by teaching about religion from a nonsectarian perspective so that they will understand the world's religions and respect those whose religious practices differ from their own.

We value the importance of dialogue - vs. debate - with people of all religions, believing it is as important to listen and understand as it is to speak and be understood.