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Humboldt Peacemaker Prize
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I am pleased to nominate Ina Harris for the Humboldt County Peacemaker Prize. I am joined in this role of nominator by two others. One is Bonnie Macgregor, current Executive Director of Humboldt Women for Shelter, which has in the past selected Ina as an honored woman at their Honoring Women annual dinner, and Bonnie is also former Humboldt County Homeless Coordinator, in which capacity she is intimately familiar with Ina's work with the homeless community. The other nomination comes from A. V. Powell, President of the H.C. chapter of the NAACP. On 3/17/96, the local branch of the NAACP unanimously voted to nominate Ina for this award.

Among the signators you will note Marjorie Feldman,current President of Temple Beth El; Roz Keller and Karen Herskovic,two former Presidents of Temple Beth El; twelve members of the NAACP including HSU Ethnic Studies Professor Nathan Smith, and A. V. Powell, current President of the local NAACP; Jean Wagner who worked with Ina for many years in the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship; Ann Wood who has worked with Ina on the Mitchell Redner Center for five years; and local political figures Julie Fulkerson,Thea Gast and John Woolley, all who have personal experience working with Ina.

Ina is an inspiration to many here in Humboldt County. She crosses many lines in the nature of her local political work, including work with the homeless organizations, the NAACP, Human Rights Commission, Temple Beth El and Unitarian Fellowship, and works also for labor rights, tenant rights and affirmative action.

What is striking is not only the breadth of her local political work, to which she has dedicated an enormous number of hours since her arrival in Humboldt County in l959, but that community and developing a sense of community is truly her life's primary committment. Her work in all these different groups makes members of these different groups feel connected. And she wrks in a tireless manner,without complaint, doing all the little "behind the scenes" work" that makes things really happen. For example, in her work with the homeless, she was not only the primary creator of the Humboldt County Coalition for Food and Housing, which ultimately went before the Board of Supervisors to request formation of the H.C. Homeless Task Force, and past chairperson and present member of the Mitchell

Redner Board of Trustees, but she organized local congreagations to provide dinners for the homeless shelter then went herself daily to several bakeries collecting donations so that there could be food each day for breakfast as well. Currently she has been working day in and day out on the Mitchell-Redner rummage sale.

Wherever there is a need,there is Ina. In fact I personally met her thirteen years ago on the Louisiana Pacific strike line at 5AM, in foggy Samoa,where a perky woman in a bright red hat was passing out coffe from her thermos for the striking workers on the picket line. And this March at the NAACP meeting, where Ina coordinated a program for women's history month where several members described their black female role models, one long time female member stood and said,"I have a very special role model, but she is not black. She is you, Ina. You have been my major role model." Professor Nate Smith responded,"Ina is the person who introduced me to all the people important in my life that I know here in Humboldt County."

What is also of note about Ina is her approach to developing leadership. She has not only excellent organizational skills; is an excellent follower as well as an experienced leader, but her goal is to train younger leaders. She is always encouraging others to develop theri skills, giving positive and useful feedback. Some of these skills probably originated in her years of being a classroom teacher. She teaching career varied from inner city schools with many minority students,to a one-room school house in rural Humboldt County.

I was impressed in recent years during a court case involving a violent incident between a black youth and an Asian youth, Ina spent every day for six months attending court to support the grandmother, mother and father of the victim. She had for ten years been a member of the H.C. Human Rights Commission; she had been a long-standing NAACP member and was for many years the NAACP newsletter editor, had been past program chair person, and was one of the organizers of the local Martin Luther King Celebrations.

Ina is well known for two other special traits. One is her much-treasured hand-calligraphied cards of appreciation she sends to people that have contributed in even a small way to the community. The other is her famous hats that many of us have seen at Supervisor meetings, court, local events.

When there is tension or major differences within a group, Ina always has faith that it can be worked out. She remains an eternal optomist and has a deep faith in people's abilities to resolve differences. I myself have brought several difficult organizational problems and she always has a perspective involving compromise that acknowledges each sides' perspective.

When Ina speaks to someone who she knows will disagree with her viewpoint, such as last year when she spoke before the Board of Supervisors

supporting the H.C. Gay and Lesbian Awareness Day Proclamation, she speaks in a personal,respectful and articulate manner andis never alienating or confrontational. She is very patient and is always willing to listen to others' viewpoints. She is a teacher by her very essence, and that includes being a good listener.

Ina gives all her love,time and energy to this communityh. She unites diverse groups. She is modest and hardworking. She has inspired other to political actionand leadership and thus multiplies the effectiveness of her work. She is committed to peacemaking between the racial groups in this community; she has deep faith that all differences can be worked out in a peaceful and respectful manner. Althoush she is currently concentrating on working on improving conditions for the homeless,she continues her additional tireless contributions toward a life of quality for all, and a community where differences are appreciated and respected. Her perky spirit and colorful attire which seem to appear just where she is needed over the past 35 years make her a symbol of the peacemaker that I believe you are trying to honor. She is a true teacher, a true activist, a true believer that we can all make it, and make it together. She always sees a way. Thank you for your consideration of Ina Harris, a community activist for all of her 74 years.

Jerry Lynn Rubin, M.D.