

# ***The SUNSHINE Awards***

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## **Press Release**

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## **For Immediate Release**

### **SUNSHINE Awards Organization Announces Father Richard Ho Lung of Jamaica To Receive The 2016 Nelson Mandela Human Rights Achievement SUNSHINE Award**

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**New Jersey, October 3, 2016.** The SUNSHINE Awards Organization announced in New Jersey that Father Richard Ho Lung has been nominated and will receive the 2016 Nelson Mandela Human Rights Achievement SUNSHINE Award for his unselfish commitment to humanity and human development. This inaugural presentation will be made at the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual SUNSHINE Awards scheduled for Saturday October 15, at the AXA Equitable Center 787 Seventh Avenue at 51st Street in New York City.

The SUNSHINE Awards Program was founded 28 years ago to recognize excellence in the performing arts, education, humanity, science, and sports of the various Caribbean countries. Over the years, the program has expanded in depth and breadth with a global view including countries from Africa, South America, Central America, Europe and India.

In 2014, following the death of Nelson Mandela, the Chairman and Founder of the SUNSHINE Awards Program, Gil Figaro, Sr. wrote the Mandela family and the Board of Directors of the Nelson Mandela Foundation in South Africa, on behalf of the SUNSHINE Awards Organization requesting approval to name a SUNSHINE Award in honor of Nelson Mandela. Dr. Hollis “Chalkdust” Liverpool wrote the criteria or requirements that an individual or group or organization must meet in order to be considered for the very special Award. The requirements were accepted and approval was granted in that same year.

Father Richard Ho Lung who was born to Chinese parents. In 1959, after completing his undergraduate studies he joined the Society of Jesus, the most respected of religious orders and certainly the most intellectually acclaimed in the Roman Catholic Church. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1971 and founded the “Missionaries of the Poor” in 1981 in Kingston, Jamaica

Father Ho Lung found himself surrounded by desperate poverty in Kingston where the poor suffered greatly, had a strong sense that God was calling him to respond to their cry and to be with them in their suffering. He believed that God was calling on him to be his helper for the poor. In 1980, Father Ho Lung made the difficult decision to leave the Society of Jesus, which he loved, and founded a religious community of men who dedicated their lives to the service of the rejected and the destitute. In light of his unselfish commitment to humanity Father Ho Lung was selected to receive the Nelson Mandela Human Rights Achievement SUNSHINE Award, using a rigid set of criteria by a group of historians and researchers, led by Dr. Liverpool.

Contacted in Jamaica by telephone, Father Ho Lung said, ***“I felt humble yet joyful for the community. God has bless us once again in our service of the poorest and most destitute of people.”***

Dr. Harold Robertson, former Consul General of Trinidad and Tobago and diplomat who was instrumental in securing Nelson Mandela’s Foundation approval to name a SUNSHINE Awards in honor of Nelson Mandela said, ***“The Nelson Mandela Human Rights Achievement SUNSHINE Award is presented to an individual who exhibits the sterling qualities of servant leadership, compassion and statesmanship in the service of humankind which were the hallmark of Nelson Mandela. This year’s recipient is an outstanding example of the personification of these qualities and is richly deserving of the honor.”***

Gil Figaro, Sr, Chairman and Founder of the SUNSHINE Awards said, ***“This inaugural presentation in honor of Nelson Mandela is to remind individuals, organizations, and even societies about the difference that Nelson Mandela made in people’s lives. He inspired the underprivileged, and demonstrated that courage, commitment and determination are necessary for victorious outcomes. I congratulate the first recipient of this very special award, Father Richard Ho Lung. I pray that he will continue to make a difference in our world with his God-given gifts and abilities.”***

The 28th Annual SUNSHINE Awards Program is sponsored in part by **United Airlines, “the preferred airline of the SUNSHINE Awards Program,” Alizé, National Staffing Associates, All Star Motors and Essex County Towing, and Trini Breakfast Shed.** Tickets can be obtained on the SUNSHINE Awards website at [www.sunshineawards.com](http://www.sunshineawards.com) or by calling **201-836-0799**. The SUNSHINE Awards Program is hosted by the Caribbean’s funniest comedians, Errol Fabien and Nikki Crosby.

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