

General Director Emeritus Honored

SGI-USA General Director Emeritus George M. Williams was honored at a luncheon on Nov. 3 in Santa Monica, Calif., celebrating his retirement after more than 35 years as a member of the SGI-USA national headquarters staff.

Mr. Williams said in an interview after the luncheon, “I will wholeheartedly support General Director Zaitso and encourage the members throughout the United States, especially having one-to-one discussions and visits with temple members to clarify the reality and true history surrounding the temple issue.”

Mr. Williams has been instrumental in bringing back a great number of temple members to the SGI — many are pioneers who had fought alongside him in propagating Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism in the early days of the organization.

A certificate of appreciation presented to Mr. Williams by General Director Fred Zaitso during the luncheon reads in part:

“On behalf of our fellow SGI-USA staff members, let me express my humble and most sincere gratitude for your selfless devotion to the widespread propagation of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism in America. As our first general director, your heartfelt actions have inspired countless individuals to overcome all obstacles and achieve personal victory, and your ongoing efforts continue to bear fruit today with the appearance of many capable youth in our organization.

“As we prepare for the 21st century, I offer my prayer for your family’s good health and for each of us to learn from your example of leadership, perseverance and mission.”

Mr. Williams reaffirmed that his retirement from staff in no way means that he is retiring from activities on the front lines of kosen-rufu. “I will continue to give encouragement in faith to individual members and attend the variety of meetings that we have in the organization.

“My memories are filled with the profound guidance and encouragement that SGI President Ikeda gave us during some 27 visits to this country,” Mr. Williams explained. “One of many, many episodes I would like to share occurred in 1963, when I accompanied him on a trip to India. As the plane approached New Delhi, President Ikeda started talking about creating a newspaper for our organization in the U.S. By the time the plane landed in New Delhi, he had named the publication the *World Tribune*. He encouraged us to focus on developing this organ paper, our propagation activities and meaningful discussion meetings — and that if we did so, the organization would develop steadily.

“Toward the future I will continue to advance with the ‘never-give-up’ spirit and fight against injustice.”

— MARGIE HALL, *Living Buddhism* Managing Editor