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Councilman Nash to Present Award to Archbishop-Desmond Tutu in Hong Kong

KANSAS CITY, MO - City Councilman Troy Nash traveled to Hong Kong, China to present the Eisenhower Medallion to South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, along with members of the Board of Directors of People to People International. The Eisenhower medallion is the highest award bestowed by the organization. Councilman Nash has been a member since 1994 and is a member of the worldwide Board of Directors.

"Archbishop Desmond Tutu has been one of the leading figures in the fight against apartheid in South Africa and is a man of enormous moral authority and courage. I used the opportunity to explain to him what we are doing locally to bring people together with our ONE Kansas City initiative on race," said Councilman Nash.

Tutu was chosen by President Mandela to chair South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and investigate the crimes committed by all sides during the apartheid regime. Desmond Tutu became the first black Anglican Dean of Johannesburg in 1975. Under his vigorous leadership, the church in South Africa became immersed in the political struggle. Tutu constantly told the government of the time that its racist approach defied the will of God and for that reason could not succeed.

Tutu has strived to remain outside party politics and always used the Bible as his text, saying God decreed all Africans were equal. In 1985, he was awarded the Nobel Peace prize because of his quest for a non-violent end to apartheid. His long crusade began to bear fruit when the reforming FW de Klerk became President. Desmond Tutu encouraged him to take chances, and the African National Congress was unbanned.

Tutu has said that he has been "appalled at the evil we have uncovered". But he said it had been a "privilege" to be part of the process of "trying to heal a traumatized and wounded people". Although the cloak of secrecy has been lifted, the revelations have stoked anger in South Africa and Archbishop Tutu has admitted that reconciliation will not be easy. The process has also taken its toll on the 64-year-old Tutu who suffered prostate cancer last year.

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