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## NEWS RELEASE

*(Editor's Note: The dinner is not open to the public, but media may cover the event, which will start at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 25, in the presidential suite in Kennedy Union.)*

### **A HOUSEHOLD NAME FOR REPORTERS COVERING THE VATICAN: MARJORIE WEEKE TO RECEIVE RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS AWARD**

DAYTON, Ohio — The University of Dayton will award its highest religious communications award to Marjorie Weeke, who facilitated media coverage for three popes over three decades as an official with the Pontifical Council for Social Communication at the Vatican.

Weeke will travel from Rome to receive the Daniel J. Kane Religious Communications Award during an invitation-only dinner on Tuesday, May 25, on campus.

"She has paved the way for international media professionals to capture the story of the Catholic church and especially the life of Pope John Paul II in imaginative and creative ways," said Sister Angela Ann Zukowski, M.H.S.H., director of the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives at the University of Dayton. "She is well known by all the major media throughout the world."

During three decades with the Pontifical Council, Weeke coordinated radio, television, film, video and photographic coverage for papal ceremonies and other events, such as the funeral of Pope Paul VI and the conclaves of Pope John Paul I and Pope John Paul II. She facilitated coverage of the papal visits of five U.S. presidents and other heads of state and monarchs. In all, she managed more than 1,000 large-scale celebrations at the Vatican under Pope John Paul II, including three Holy Years, the millennium and the canonizations of saints.

Upon her retirement in 2001, Tim Russert of NBC's "Meet the Press" observed, "She never took center stage, but always made it happen." Veteran still photographers presented her with an album of each one's favorite photo of Pope John Paul II.

Weeke recently scoured through 4.5 million photographs of Pope John Paul II's first 25 years in office to select 160 images for use in the 2003 papal anniversary book, *John Paul II: A Light for the World* that was published by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. She still works as a media consultant on film productions and television programs about the Vatican,

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most recently for NBC News, ABC's "Good Morning America," CBS' "60 Minutes," NHK-TV of Japan and film companies from the U.S., France, Denmark and Norway.

"For photographers, filmmakers and TV producers, she was known as the woman to see at the Vatican, and for the Vatican she was an evangelist for those in TV, reflecting the 'good news' of Christ in what she did," said Archbishop John P. Foley, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communication.

Some notable projects throughout her career include the Gregory Peck film, "The Scarlet and the Black," two live NBC "Today Show" broadcasts from St. Peter's Square and an in-depth behind-the-scenes segment for CBS' "48 Hours." She coordinated the filming of Peter Ustinov's series on the papacy and Morris West's series for ABC TV of Australia, "The Triple Crown." She also facilitated hundreds of photo stories and daily news coverage for international photo agencies and magazines, including *National Geographic*, *Paris Match*, *Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, Reuters, Associated Press Photo and Agence France Presse.

Before Weeke worked for the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, she was a reporter and producer at Vatican Radio. At one point, she served in the U.S. Department of State as a press officer in Brussels and Casablanca. She began her career as an editor and reporter in Southern California.

Born in Whittier, Calif., Weeke holds a bachelor's and master's degree in journalism from Marquette University, where she was honored by the College of Journalism with an award for professional excellence in religious communication.

Weeke was awarded the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal in 1983 and named a Dame of the Pontifical Order of St. Gregory the Great in 1995. She was decorated with the Royal Order of the Northern Star by Sweden and by Chile with the Bernardo O'Higgins medal in 1993. President Jacques Chirac of France named her a Knight in the National Order of Merit in 1998. Presenting Weeke with her decoration, French Ambassador to the Vatican Jean-Louis Lucet said, "In the constantly agitated context of modern journalism, you maintain a perfect calm that allows papal and other Vatican events to unfold with the dignity they should. Your knowledge and love of the church and your professional experience make you the perfect contact for those covering the Vatican on a daily basis."

The University of Dayton annually awards the Daniel J. Kane Religious Communications Award, named after the former communication director of the archdiocese of Cincinnati, to nationally and internationally recognized figures who have made a lifetime contribution to religious communications.