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University of Dayton

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# Human rights award to honor advocate for housing and land rights; Students to unveil project about those addressing housing justice in Oakland, California

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Monday March 13, 2023

Formerly unhoused, Rob Robinson has dedicated his life to advocating for fair and adequate housing for all. For his efforts, the University of Dayton Human Rights Center will honor Robinson with its Romero Human Rights Award.

"During the nomination and evaluation process, Rob emerged as the evident choice for this year's Romero Award centered on tackling the crisis of homelessness and housing issues in the U.S. and globally," said Shelley Inglis, executive director of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center. "As an advocate with the lived experience of being unhoused, Rob works tirelessly on transforming our relationship with housing and land in U.S. society, traveling the world and building coalitions. Rob's emphasis on international human rights standards while cultivating authentic solidarity with grassroots land and housing justice movements sets his work apart and superbly reflects Saint Oscar Romero's spirit."

Robinson is senior advisor at Partners in Dignity and Rights, and a human rights movement-builder with roots in New York City and networks worldwide. His work focuses on economic justice and addresses issues such as debt, police violence and access to broadband. Robinson also has been involved with the U.S. Human Rights Network, the Campaign to Restore National Housing Rights, and the Land and Housing Action Group of the Take Back the Land national movement.

Internationally, he is known for his deep commitment to the Movement of People Affected by Dams in Brazil, the Landless Workers Movement in Brazil; and the International Alliance of Inhabitants, an alliance of 12,000 members worldwide which supports a zero evictions platform.

"Our struggles as poor, low-income and disenfranchised people are the same no matter where we reside in the world," Robinson said. "Everyone — and I mean everyone — deserves a clean, affordable and dignified place to live. Knowing this we must build our collective power worldwide and come together whether we are in the U.S., South Africa, Spain or Latin America. We must unite."

[Read more about Robinson here.](#)

Created in 2000, the University of Dayton Romero Human Rights Award is presented to an individual or organization promoting the dignity of all human beings and alleviating human suffering. It honors the ministry and martyrdom of Saint Oscar Romero, a Salvadoran archbishop slain while officiating at a Mass because of his vocal defense of the human rights of the poor and disenfranchised. [Click here to see a list of honorees.](#)

Robinson will receive the award on the 43rd anniversary of Saint Romero's death — March 24 — during the [Human Rights Center's Romero Human Rights Award ceremony and symposium](#), which begin at 2:30 p.m. at the University of Dayton School of Law in Keller Hall. During the symposium, practitioners and scholars will explore the challenges of affordability and gentrification, eviction and displacement, and criminalization of homelessness. The aim is to highlight innovative and sustainable solutions that shift housing systems and their relationship to land toward respect for human dignity, equity and justice in Dayton, the U.S. and worldwide.

The event also will include the unveiling of "Unhousing: Claiming the Human Right to Home," the new exhibition by the [Moral Courage Project](#), an experiential learning and advocacy program at the Human Rights Center.

The Moral Courage Project tells stories of individuals who tackle human rights issues in their communities. The project trains students in human rights storytelling and typically involves extensive immersion in communities at the center of the story. Previous Moral Courage

Projects chronicled stories of people in Ferguson, Missouri, at the U.S.-Mexico border, and those working to provide access to clean water in Flint and Detroit, Michigan, and Appalachia.

During the fieldwork phase, students conducted research on the ground in Oakland, California, where they interviewed community leaders, especially those with first-hand experience of housing insecurity. This multimedia production includes the fourth season of the podcast, "Moral Courage Radio," a documentary film, and a print publication.

For more information or interviews, contact Shawn Robinson, University of Dayton associate director of news and communication, at [srobinson1@udayton.edu](mailto:srobinson1@udayton.edu).