

Baha'is To Honor Sr. Citizen At Fri. Fete

The Baha'i Community of Wilmette, Ill., has chosen Human Rights Day, Friday, to honor one of Wilmette's outstanding elder citizens, Dr. Martin Hayes Bickham.

Dr. Bickham will be recognized for a lifetime of dedication to the cause of Human Rights in a special program at the Baha'i House of Worship at 8 p.m. with the featured speaker to be the chairman of the National Baha'i Assembly, Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, professor of history at Yale University.

Since 1919, Dr. Bickham has been identified with the cause of human rights. At that time he was appointed to the race relations commission of the Church Federation, headed by Dr. Shailer Mathews, Dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School.

Fifteen years later, Dr. Bickham succeeded to the chairmanship, working always to improve race relations in this area through United Charities, the Church Federation and other agencies in Chicago.

With increase of race problems in Illinois during World War II, Illinois citizens persuaded Gov. Dwight Green to

set up the first official State Commission on Race Relations in August 1943. Dr. Bickham was named chairman, further strengthening his role as "father of human rights in Illinois." Along with the late Horace Holley of Wilmette, for many years national Baha'i secretary, Dr. Bickham was one of the founders of the North Shore Human Relations Committee, founded in 1946.

This group was the forerunner of several human relations committees which are now supported in various northern suburbs. He is a board member of the North Suburban Coordinating Council, continuing an active participation in his lifetime concern for bettering human relations.

Dr. Bickham has been an active and dedicated member of the Methodist Church for his entire life, and has served as a lay minister for 68 years, lecturing in all parts of the United States. His religious values have been his inspiration in his work for the rights of all men regardless of religion or race.

The program to honor Dr. Bickham will have a number of people who have worked with or benefitted by his efforts over half a century.

The Baha'is have always had a total support position for the Declaration of Human Rights, and Dr. Kazemzadeh will speak on, "Working Together for Human Rights."

In addition to Dr. Kazemzadeh's appearance at the Baha'i House of Worship, Wilmette, on Friday, he will speak on Saturday evening, at the Chicago Baha'i Center, 116 S. Michigan Avenue, at 8 p.m. His address Saturday night will be "Why Human Rights?"

On Sunday morning, he has been invited to be the guest speaker at the Unitarian Church, Evanston, and will address the congregation at 11 a.m. on the subject, "Religion in the New Age."