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Two longtime leaders get awards from National Black Catholic Congress

by Catholic News Service

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) -- Two longtime black leaders in the Catholic Church received national awards during the recent National Black Catholic Congress XI, held in Indianapolis.

Beverly A. Carroll, founding director of the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for African-American Catholics and currently assistant director in their Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church, received the congress' inaugural Servant of Christ Award for lifetime achievement in outstanding leadership and service to the Catholic Church in the African-American community.

Receiving the same award was Ronald G. Jackson Sr., senior director of government affairs for Catholic Charities USA and former executive director of the D.C. Catholic Conference.

Mar Munoz-Visoso, executive director of the cultural diversity secretariat, described Carroll as "an example of the 'good and faithful servant.'"

"She is a respected leader in the community and has provided invaluable advice to the bishops' conference on matters concerning the evangelization of African-American Catholics," she added.

Internationally, Carroll has led several U.S. delegations to South Africa, Peru and Brazil. Prior to joining the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1988, she spent 20 years in the Archdiocese of Baltimore's Office of Urban Affairs and provided staff assistance to the Lawrence Cardinal Shehan Scholarship Fund.

In 1988 she received the Dr. Martin Luther King Award for Civil Rights from the Archdiocese of Baltimore and in 2008 the Excellence in Leadership Award from the National Association of Black Catholic Administrators.

Bishop John H. Ricard, retired head of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Fla., and president of the National Black Catholic Congress, said that while working with Jackson during his time with the D.C. Catholic Conference he had "seen firsthand his singular and tireless efforts in advancing the Catholic faith and the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

"This award honors many years of exceptional service among his brothers and sisters and recognizes a commitment to continually go above and beyond the call of duty," he added.

Jackson's service began as a voter registration volunteer on the Mississippi Gulf Coast during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. After college he became the first professional African-American staff member in the office of City Councilman Douglas Shanks in Jackson, Miss.

In 1974 he moved to Washington, where he joined the staff of then-Rep. (now Sen.) Thad Cochran, R-Miss., as the first African-American staff member to work for a member of Congress from Mississippi since reconstruction.

During his 15 years as D.C. Catholic Conference director, Jackson served as president of the National Association of State Catholic Conference Directors, 2006-2008.

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