

# IN MEMORIAM

By Robert Perrone

WE ALSO MOURN THE PASSING OF THESE COLLEAGUES:

Loren Smith — ARC  
James Sipes — ARC  
Deva Chopyak — CRC

## DR. PRECIOUS BELL CRAFT



What's in a name? You won't have to go far to encounter the perfect description of Precious Bell Craft; it's there, right in her name. She was "precious" to her family; she was "precious" to her students; she was "precious" to the many people who

admired her vocal ensemble, Voices of Faith; she was "precious" to the members of the Shattuck Avenue United Methodist Church in Oakland, where she bused to and from Sacramento on Fridays and Sundays to lead a small gospel choir.

Precious Craft's life was meaningful, not just subjectively but, objectively meaningful to the society in which she lived. She served others and her god; she created beauty; she consistently pursued excellence; and, she engaged in a lifelong pursuit of knowledge, all activities that give a life meaning.

Dr. Craft was born on October 20, 1930. She was the sixteenth, and totally unexpected child of a Texas minister who considered himself blessed and so named her Precious. Dr. Craft graduated from high school at the early age of 14 and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree at 18. She went on to earn a Master's in Music from Texas Southern University, a Master's in Education and a Ph.D. in Music Ministry from the Graduate Theological Seminary in Berkeley.

Dr. Craft's career in education spanned over sixty years. She was the driving force behind the success of the CRC Contemporary Gospel Choir. It might be more accurate to say that Precious Bell Craft was a driving force, period. She served as the director of several church choirs. In 1967, she became the founding director of The Voices of Faith choir, an interdenominational, intergenerational, multi-ethnic choir renowned for its performances of Negro spirituals and contemporary gospel songs, including many that Dr. Craft composed or arranged.

Dr. Craft did not choose her profession - her profession chose her. "It's a birthright, a calling if you will," she once said. Her passion made Dr. Craft one of the most popular and sought after music in

structors in Northern California. And although she had an endless list of academic credits, her lessons were not limited to the classroom.

"I am motivated by a desire to heighten the spiritual consciousness of people everywhere, to offer hope and inspiration, and to communicate the power of the gospel. I believe in its power to change lives, values, and attitudes for the better". Precious Bell Craft lived her life by those words and the world is lesser for her absence. Dr. Craft died on April 7, 2011.

## FRED A. DAWKINS



Professor Fred Dawkins, a former member of the Los Rios Community College District Board of Trustees, former adjunct professor at Sacramento City College, former member of the LR-CFT Executive Board and

Assistant Professor of Business Law at Sacramento City College passed away on September 26.

After graduating from Cordova Senior High School, Fred attended CRC for two years and graduated from CSU Sacramento with a double major in Philosophy and Sociology in 1978. He was the valedictorian of his graduating class.

He was admitted to Harvard Law School and received an Earl Warren Legal Scholarship.

After graduating from Harvard in 1981, he returned to Sacramento and joined the law firm of Downey, Brand, Seymour and Rowher. His primary area of expertise was business litigation.

Fred was an unswerving civil rights advocate and was thrice appointed to the board of the Sacramento Human Rights and Fair Housing Commission.

Fred was a mentor to many of the students he taught, helping them with their lives outside of the classroom and giving them the tools necessary to succeed at a four-year college or university.

He will be missed by many—his family, his colleagues, his union brothers and sisters, and his students. ■