

Visionary leadership

UNIVERSITY BOARD MEMBER HONORED
BY GENERAL CONFERENCE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

During the full session of the Loma Linda University Board of Trustees on February 11, Tom Zapara, a member of the Board since 1981, and his wife, Vi Zapara, were honored by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for their support of Adventist education.

The Global Award in Adventist Education was presented to the Zaparas for their visionary leadership, time, and substantial contributions to support Adventist education in North America and abroad.

Making the presentation was Humberto Rasi, PhD, director of the General Conference Department of Education, and Loma Linda University Board member since 1990.

Dr. Rasi read the following tribute about the Zaparas:

"For many years, Tom and Vi Zapara have provided visionary leadership, time, and substantial contributions to support Seventh-day Adventist education in North America and abroad.

"The Zaparas are both alumni of La Sierra University. Tom began his professional career in sales for a pharmaceutical company, while Violet taught in the Adventist school system. In 1952, they formed their company, Zee Medical Products, which specialized in first-aid products.

"Thirty years later the company was sold, and ever since the Zaparas have been making sizeable gifts to the advance-

ment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, especially in the field of education. Subsequently, the Zaparas started Life Support Products, Inc., and developed it into an international operation.

"In addition to his business activities, Tom Zapara finds time for numerous philanthropic and community activities, including membership in the Board of Trustees of Loma Linda University and in Adventist-Layman Services and Industries. The Zaparas have been the main contributors in the establishment of the HART Research Institute that develops resources and materials in support of Seventh-day Adventist missions.

"In the field of education, the Zaparas were the prime movers behind the BECA Program—Business Executives Challenge to Alumni. Their initial contribution of \$400,000 helped to inspire additional gifts to bring the fund to more than \$5 million. When the BECA Program was launched, only six percent of the alumni of Adventist colleges and universities contributed to their alma mater; nine years later the percentage of alumni involvement had grown more than four-fold, to 25 percent. Due to this initiative, Adventist colleges and universities in North America receive annually more than \$25 million in philanthropic gifts.

"Encouraged by the response, Tom and Vi extended the BECA program to colleges and universities overseas, thus benefiting Adventist higher education in

Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the Asia-Pacific region.

"In 1986, the Zaparas spearheaded a new project designed to involve alumni of Adventist academies in philanthropic support of their schools. Before the Academy Alumni Advancement Program began, less than \$20,000 were received in annual contributions from alumni and friends. But now, thanks to this innovative program and the Zaparas' challenge grant, academies raise more than \$8 million annually.

"And there's even more to the vision of the Zaparas for Christian education. During 1987-96, Tom and Violet contributed in excess of \$1 million to fund the Zapara Teaching Award program. This amount, supplemented by Church entities, was used to honor and encourage teachers who have shown a commitment to excellence in Adventist education.

"In recent years, the Zaparas have contributed more than \$1 million to strengthen and expand the educational services offered by La Sierra University, Loma Linda University, and Pacific Union College.

"They have been particularly interested in supporting the pioneering efforts of Loma Linda University in providing state-of-the-art, interactive distance learning educational programs.

"Several philanthropic and educational organizations have recognized the Zaparas for their generous support. In 1981, Loma Linda University conferred on Tom the Distinguished Humanitarian Award.

"Tom is a visionary salesman—a master in the art of leveraging personal contributions into major philanthropic endeavors that benefit thousands of young people and adults both within and outside Adventist circles.

"So today, on behalf of more than 1 million Adventist students, educators, and Church leaders from around the world, who have been blessed by the vision, commitment, and generosity of Tom and Vi Zapara, we are honored to present them the Global Award in Adventist Education."

> SCOPE



Tom Zapara, a member of the Loma Linda University Board of Trustees since 1981, and his wife, Vi, were honored by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for their support of Adventist education during the full session of the LLU Board of Trustees meeting on Wednesday, February 11. Shown, from left, are Humberto Rasi, PhD, director of the General Conference Department of Education and Board member since 1990; B. Lyn Behrens, MBBS, president of Loma Linda University; Vi Zapara; Tom Zapara; Calvin B. Rock, DMin, PhD, chair, Loma Linda University Board of Trustees; and Alfred C. McClure, vice chair of the Loma Linda University Board of Trustees.