

# Anna Garlin Spencer Volunteer Award

## *Foreword*

The American Ethical Union (AEU) and its congregations function in large part on the volunteer time and monetary commitment of its members. Many times, members work “behind the scenes” on programs and events, often providing supplies and materials at their own expense. At times congregations only recognize such contributions after a member moves away or no longer attends. Often, these members have ideas and proposals which not only make their congregation a success, but which would translate to other ethical congregations or even to AEU programs. The AEU’s only other national award, the Elliot-Black Award, typically goes to an outside individual who has made an ethical commitment at significant personal risk. The Elliot-Black Award is not appropriate to recognize contributions internal to the AEU and Ethical Culture.

The Board of Directors of the AEU voted at its September 2008 meeting to develop an internal “AEU Ethical Volunteer Award” to recognize the grass roots nature of our religion and to acknowledge the unsung work of members of its affiliated ethical congregations. At its January 2009 meeting, the AEU Board adopted the description, criteria, and process below and named this award after one of the most well-known and recognized woman leaders in Ethical Culture, Anna Garlin Spencer.

Born in 1851, Anna Garlin Spencer was a social activist and feminist icon. She was the first woman ordained in Rhode Island, became a founder of the NAACP, promoted child labor laws, and worked for equal rights for women. She was also the first woman Ethical Culture leader and her life-long work embodies the spirit intended by this award.

## *Description*

The American Ethical Union (AEU) Ethical Volunteer Award recognizes a lay member of any AEU-affiliated ethical congregation in good standing for his or her significant, volunteer contributions to the success of that ethical congregation and, therefore, the success of the AEU or volunteer contributions on behalf of the AEU itself. The AEU Board presents the award on behalf of the AEU and the nominating congregation.

## *Definitions*

*AEU-affiliated ethical congregation in good standing:* an ethical society, circle, or fellowship (including ESWoW and FES) accepted for affiliation by the AEU Board and which—

- meets its financial commitment to the AEU,
- represents the vision and mission of the AEU, as determined by the AEU Board, and
- is not the focus of any investigation, pending remedial action, or censure by the AEU Board.

*Lay member:* A pledging member of an ethical congregation who—

- is not the leader, assistant leader, or leader-intern,
- is not in arrears in his or her monetary pledge to the ethical congregation, and
- is not a current member of the ethical congregation's board of trustees.

*Significant, volunteer contributions:* time, knowledge, or skills provided by the lay member on a consistent basis over a significant period of time, the contribution of which allows the ethical congregation to promote or present programs, events, or publicity it would not be able to do except through hiring of an outside subject matter expert. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- production and maintenance of a society Web site, newsletter, or other publications
- providing themed decorations, artwork, or other materials for a congregational events, i.e., Winter Festival, Founder's Day, Darwin Day, Coming of Age Ceremonies, etc.
- development, printing, and distribution of publicity related materials, i.e., print or electronic media ads, brochures, flyers, promotional items (bumper stickers, buttons, pens, pins, etc.), or other items which explain and promote Ethical Culture, the ethical congregation, or the AEU
- providing adult education opportunities to members or the outside community on behalf of the ethical congregation
- developing or assisting in the development of curricula for adult education or Sunday School
- time and money spent on YES or FES activities on behalf of the congregation or the AEU

### ***Nomination Process Overview***

Any AEU-affiliated ethical congregation in good standing may nominate a lay member of its society to recognize that member's significant, volunteer contributions. Any ethical congregation member or the congregation's board of trustees may generate the nomination. The ethical congregation's board of trustees endorses the nomination then presents it to the AEU Board for review at one of its bi-monthly meetings. The AEU Board endorses or rejects the nomination. The AEU Board presents the recipient a specially designed award at the next AEU Annual Assembly.

### ***Criteria***

1. An ethical congregation's board of directors may forward one nomination to the AEU Board for consideration a maximum of six times within the AEU's fiscal year to coincide with the six annual meetings of the AEU Board.
2. An ethical congregation submits a nomination using the AEU Ethical Volunteer Nomination Form, found on the AEU Web site.
3. The member nominated should be a consistently active member of the nominating ethical congregation for at least three full, fiscal years.

4. The member's contributions must be substantive and noteworthy, i.e., such that without the member's contribution the society would have to hire outside expertise to accomplish the same function.
5. A person may be nominated more than once a year but may only receive the AEU Ethical Volunteer Award once every five years.

### ***Nomination Procedures***

1. Download the AEU Ethical Volunteer Award Nomination form from [www.aeu.org](http://www.aeu.org).
2. Complete all portions of the nomination and present it to the ethical congregation's board of trustees.
3. The ethical congregation's board of trustees reviews the nomination against the AEU Ethical Volunteer Award criteria. The board of trustees can:
  - a. Vote to endorse the nomination.
  - b. Reject the nomination.
4. If the ethical congregation's board of trustees votes to reject the nomination, it should return the nomination to the nominator with an explanation.
5. If the ethical congregation's board of trustees votes to endorse the nomination, the president of the board of trustees signs the form in the appropriate section.
6. The ethical congregation's board of trustees forwards the endorsed nomination to the AEU Executive Director and the President of the AEU Board of Directors at least 30 days before the next AEU Board meeting for inclusion on the agenda for that meeting.
  - a. Any nomination received fewer than 30 days before the next AEU Board meeting will not be considered until the following meeting.
  - b. The AEU Executive Director will advise the ethical congregation that the nomination will not be considered until the following meeting.
  - c. In such a case the nominating ethical congregation will not be able to submit another nomination for the following meeting.
7. The AEU Board reviews all nominations received within the appropriate time frame and selects one AEU Ethical Volunteer Awardee per meeting.
8. The AEU Board notes the selection in the meeting minutes, and the AEU administrative office prepares the AEU Ethical Volunteer Award certificate. (See figure 2.) The AEU Web site will also maintain a continuous listing of all awardees.
9. The AEU Executive Director notifies the ethical congregation who nominated the selectee and makes arrangements for presentation of the award at the next AEU Assembly.

# *Anna Garlin Spencer Volunteer Award Nomination Form*

**NOMINATING SOCIETY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF NOMINEE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**JUSTIFICATION OF NOMINATION:**

*Based on the Definitions and Criteria in the description of the Anna Garlin Spencer Volunteer Award information, give a detailed explanation of why the person you have nominated should receive this award. Provide specific examples and situations. Attach additional sheets, if necessary.*

**WHOM TO CONTACT REGARDING THIS NOMINATION:**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE OF APPROVAL BY SOCIETY BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

**PRINTED NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE REVIEWED BY THE AEU BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ENDORSEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE AEU BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

**PRINTED NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE OF NOTIFICATION TO NOMINATING SOCIETY'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** \_\_\_\_\_