

Presentation of Schweitzer Medal by Kerry Simpson to Deborah Schmidt

It is an honor and privilege to recognize Deborah Schmidt as a Sweitzer recipient.

Deborah gave us her gifts as soon as she came to UUCB. Playing the flute, heading the Children's choir, and singing in the choir. Did you know, per Sandra Sotherland, that Deborah has the best sense of rhythm of anyone she knew? And in her poetry, we have her beautiful words, set to music even. Such a very talented presence in our church community.

In 2013 Deborah agreed to run for the Board. She served as President for two years. Deborah's dignity and even-handed leadership was so positive for the Board. At a time when there was division and rancor, she moved the Board to honor and practice being in covenant with one another. The kindness and caring that our Board members bring to their deliberations is part of her legacy.

In 2017 the Church was in trouble: we had a financial mess; our business administrator was gone; and our long-term custodian left his position. Knowing all of this, Deborah agreed to serve on the Coordinating Team and to be its chair. She held UUCB together. In fact, on several occasions, because we lacked an events coordinator and custodian, Deborah stepped in to cover events. On one particular weekend, she personally managed 13 events! Her competence and generosity got us through a very difficult period.

To earn the Schweitzer award, one must show above and beyond *leadership, caring, and time given to the Church*. Yes, yes, and yes. Deborah merits this honor, absolutely.

I want to talk about Deborah the woman, wife, mother, friend. Here are the words used to describe Deborah by church members with whom I spoke.

Gentle, quiet leadership, tactful, thoughtful, even-handed, disarming smile, comes from a centered place, settles people down, peacemaker, worked hard, one of his heroes, wonderful musician, very talented, good writer, deeply good person, principled, committed and devoted to UUCB, warm spiritual presence, brilliantly articulate, tolerant, just *there* when needed, quietly very strong, caring, good heart, good person, warmth, affirming, lives our covenant in relationship with others. Only accolades.

Finally, from my interview with Deborah, when she talked about her children and asked what she and Daniel sought for them, she commented that they had instilled in them the whole range of what it means to be human. To live with courage!

In closing, Deborah Schmidt is an amazing woman. I love her. She is one of my heroes.

May many blessings flow to you and your family, Deborah. Congratulations!