

Linda Fink Biography and History of the Award

In 1972, Linda L. Fink, a Flat Top, W.Va., native and 1971 graduate of Concord College, felt a calling that she described in her own words as, "The world is big and life is short. I want to live, work, play, share, teach, learn and help as much as I possibly can." For Linda, those words were all too true. Ms. Fink, who translated her calling into a Peace Corps assignment, died tragically while in Zaire, Africa, while serving in the Corps.

Although Linda's life was short, she had accomplished much and had proven herself as a caring and dedicated young person, concerned with making the world a better place. She was valedictorian of the Spanishburg High School class of 1968. She went on to Concord where she was an active and popular student. She was listed in "Who's Who Among American Colleges," president of Cardinal Key Honor Society and served as vice president and secretary of Gamma Beta Phi service organization. She was named "Miss Congeniality" in the Miss Concord pageant and was a member of the Concord College Bible Club. Linda graduated with honors in only three years.

After leaving Concord, she taught at Ansted High School for one year before joining the Peace Corps in the summer of 1972. In her application for the Corps she stated, "There are people who need help through love and encouragement and positive thinking and understanding, that's my biggest talent." It was because of her talent for helping others that she found herself in Africa serving as a teacher and peacemaker among those who needed her.

On January 16, 1972, she disappeared while swimming in a river. The cause of her death remains a mystery, although her family believes that she drowned. Walter C. Howe, acting director of the Peace Corps at the time, described Linda in a letter to her family, printed in the *Raleigh Register*: "Linda was an extremely idealistic young woman. Throughout her association with the Peace Corps she was always hopeful that her concerns and efforts would help the Zairians obtain a better understanding of the United States. Linda truly exemplified the ideals upon which the Peace Corps was founded."

The award has been given to an outstanding community member since 1995.

Past Recipients

Some past recipients include: **Georgia Kelley (deceased), Barbara Hawkins, Dr. Kathy Wides, Anne O'Sullivan '75, Gilbert "Gene" Bailey '57, Homer Ball '48, April Puzzuoli, and Greg Puckett '93.**