Subject: Peace and justice advocate Chuck Booker Hirsch visiting Marquette

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To whom it may concern:

Peace and justice advocate Chuck Booker Hirsch will be speaking on Marquette's campus at the Weasler Auditorium on October 12, 2006 at 7:30pm (Indigenous People Day) as part of a forum on the effort to close the School of the Americas/WHINSEC hosted by University Ministry and J.U.S.T.I.C.E. Besides practicing civil disobedience and working on immigration issues Chuck leads a parish in Ann Arbor, Mi and travels to universities around the country outlining the history of the United States foreign policy in Latin/South America and the effects it has had on the people of those countries. Chuck would be happy to make presentations to individual classes on the evening of the 11th of October or during the day on October 12. If this fits into your schedule or would like more information please contact patrick.kennelly@marquette.edu

Chuck's bio sketch is at the bottom of this note and please pass this on to whomever you believe might find it relevant.

All the wealth of earth and heaven,
Pat Kennelly
708 271 0510

The Rev. Charles Booker-Hirsch has served as Pastor of Northside Presbyterian Church in Ann Arbor since June 1998 (see www.NorthsidePres.org for more about this dynamic congregation). From 1989-93, Chuck worked in the Sanctuary Movement in California and Arizona, an underground railroad of faith communities assisting hundreds of thousands of Central American refugees as they fled U.S.-backed political oppression, particularly in Guatemala and El Salvador.

In the mid-1990s, aided by the Academy Award-nominated documentary short School of Assassins, Chuck and many others were introduced to the strong link between the refugee outbreak and the terrorist training received by Latin American military at the School of Americas (SOA) in Ft. Benning, GA. In November 1998, Chuck joined over 2300 in trespassing onto Ft. Benning in an annual nonviolent protest of this school – a protest that now draws nearly 20,000 persons annually to its rally and vigi outside the gates.

No one was arrested that year; all who “crossed the line” were transported to a nearby city park in school buses and dumped there. But when Chuck joined approximately 100 others in a solemn nonviolent funeral procession onto the base in November 2001 – circumventing the post-911 chain-link fence in the process – all were arrested. Five months later, Chuck was among 43 trespassers selected for indictment. After a five-day trial in Georgia, 30 received prison time for this Class B misdemeanor, ranging from 90 days (Chuck’s tour of duty) to six months. Fines ranging from $500 to $5000 were also levied.

With the full support of his family, congregation, and the Presbyterian Church (USA), Chuck served his three months at a minimum security federal penitentiary in NW Pennsylvania from September to December 2002. He has addressed over 40 university and church audiences in five U.S. states and Canada about the importance of closing the SOA – renamed in 2001 the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) – and has debated both an Army lieutenant colonel and WHINSEC’s public relations officer in a public forum at
their request.

Chuck met his life partner, the Rev. Amy Booker-Hirsch, while they were working with refugees in Tucson, AZ in 1992. They have an eight-year-old son, basketball fiend Andrew Booker.