



Mike Donahue, longtime anchor and reporter at KOIN-TV, was one of two keynote speakers at the YMCA dinner.

## YMCAs in Portland area focus on agency's Christian roots

By JOHN FORTMEYER  
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PORTLAND — In a day when more and more agencies seem to be avoiding any public ties to the Christian faith, the local YMCAs continue to run counter to that trend.

"It is so exciting to hear about an organization that is putting Christian principles back into the organization ... So many times we hear just the opposite," said local businesswoman and registered nurse Karen Fox, one of two keynote speakers at a YMCA dinner Oct. 22. "Thank you for putting the 'C' back into the YMCA. It

warms my heart."

Fox, who is president of Portland-based Medical Resource Network, Inc., and longtime KOIN-TV 6 newsman Mike Donahue were the featured speakers at the third annual *Christian Principles in Business and Life* dinner sponsored by YMCA of Columbia-Willamette.

More than 200 people attended the gathering at the Governor Hotel, raising about \$30,000 for the "Y."

The local YMCA organization, which operates facilities throughout the metro area, several years ago began a concerted new



Karen Fox

focus on the Christian foundation on which the Y M C A worldwide was built more than a century and a half ago.

That emphasis continues under the leadership of Bob Reichen, vice president of mission advancement and chaplain for the local organization. He said the YMCA tradition of a healthy "mind, body and spirit" is long rooted in the agency. "I really believe that mission is important because it really reflects the purpose of our existence," he said.

Describing her business background, Fox recalled her mother admonishing her to "always do your work as unto the Lord." With that kind of



Bob Reichen

attitude also being shown by the YMCA, she said, it is important for the local faith community to show its support. "As (the YMCA) gives us encouragement, hopefully we can give encouragement back to them," she said.

Donahue alluded to his personal love for rose gardening to emphasize how Christian principles appear in day-to-day life. Noting that roses are known for their wonderful fragrances, he said believers likewise are to be "the aroma of Christ to others."

Donahue said that working in the pressurized world of TV news compels him to stay as God focused as he can, rather than focused on the daily chal-

lenges. "I don't try to be a Christian," he said. "But I have discovered that God can do it, He can be seen in me, if I let Him."

Kelly Skopil, assistant director of a YMCA child development center in Portland, believes a focus on Christ makes a huge difference for such programs.

"I truly believe that our centers will stand out from other centers, and our programs will stand out from other programs," she said.

Local businessman Chuck Ferguson, a longtime YMCA volunteer, said historical documents show it was "the drawing power of Jesus" that brought the YMCA leadership together in Britain in the early days.

That same power must be tapped into, he said. "It if comes to the point, ever, that it is just the YMA, we're finished."