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For Immediate Release

Smyzer, Louisville pastor, receives first Kente Cloth Award by Campbellsville University

By Linda Waggener, marketing and media relations coordinator

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Campbellsville University’s Louisville Center graduate, the Rev. Matthew Smyzer, was presented with the first Kente Cloth June 11 at Campbellsville University’s Louisville Center commencement convocation.

As CU President Michael V. Carter and Dr. Frank Cheatham, vice president for academics, ceremoniously draped the Kente Cloth over Smyzer’s shoulders, John Chowning, vice president for church and external relations and executive assistant to the president, explained the significance of the new CU tradition and how it related to the first recipient.

Chowning said that by tradition, the Kente Cloth is bestowed upon outstanding individuals who have attained milestones in their lives and shown their worth to family, community and God – those who are servant leaders. Each Kente Cloth is a handmade work of art, portraying the visual representation history, philosophy, ethics and moral values in African culture.

The colors of the cloth have deep rooted traditional meanings meant to reflect the attributes of the wearer. Smyzer’s Kente Cloth’s primary shade is the Campbellsville University color, maroon, and the traditional color of mother earth. It is associated with healing. Chowning said, “Matthew Smyzer is well known for his healing of spiritual and societal wounds within his community.”

The secondary color, blue, stands for peacefulness, harmony and love. Chowning said, “What better adjectives would describe Reverend Smyzer with his perpetual smile and ability to bring us all together?”

He said, “Gold signifies royalty, high status, glory and spiritual purity. As characterized by his leadership of the Baptist Fellowship Center and leadership of the Campbellsville University Church Relations Council, Matthew Smyzer has attained the status of one who can get things done in the cause of community, education and his faith.”

White, the fourth color in Smyzer’s Kente Cloth, represents purification and sanctification. Chowning said, “There is no better example of commitment to God and the principals of belief than Matthew Smyzer.”

Smyzer, who will earn his master of theology degree in July from CU-Louisville, is a member of the CU Board of Trustees, pastor of Beargrass Missionary Baptist Church, superintendent of missions for the Central District Baptist Association and executive director of Baptist Fellowship in Louisville. He and his wife, Joann, have two daughters, one of whom, Felicia, attended the commencement convocation with them.

Campbellsville University is a widely acclaimed Kentucky-based Christian university with over 3,000 students offering 44 undergraduate programs, 16 master’s degrees and four postgraduate areas. The website for complete information is campbellsville.edu.

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outline for picture

The Rev. Matthew Smyzer received his master of theology degree from Campbellsville

University's Louisville Center and, at the commencement celebration, he was awarded the first CU symbolic Kente Cloth. Pictured with him are his wife, Joann, at left, and their daughter Felicia. (Campbellsville University Photo by Linda Waggener)