

## Southwest Texan attends event for social-action leaders

More than 70 church and society leaders—including one from Southwest Texas—spent Nov. 5-7 in Washington learning firsthand about United Methodist social action.

Pastor Nathaniel A.B. Hankins of St. Peter's By the Sea UMC, Corpus Christi, represented the Southwest Texas Conference at the event sponsored by the General Board of Church and Society. He is vice chair of the conference Board of Church and Society.

"This was my first opportunity to attend an event like this," Hankins said. "To be in the 75-year-old United Methodist Building—the Heart of the Hill—was a dream come true."

### Executive addresses group

Conference representatives heard from the Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett, chief executive of the social-action board, and other staff members. They stressed the importance of doing and advocating works of justice in leading Christian disciples toward John Wesley's vision of "perfection."

Hankins said discussion topics included:

- What church and society boards in other conferences were doing to implement the United Methodist Social Principles and work for justice and mercy

- Social-justice legislation going to the denomination's top policy-making body next year.

- North American Free Trade Agreement.

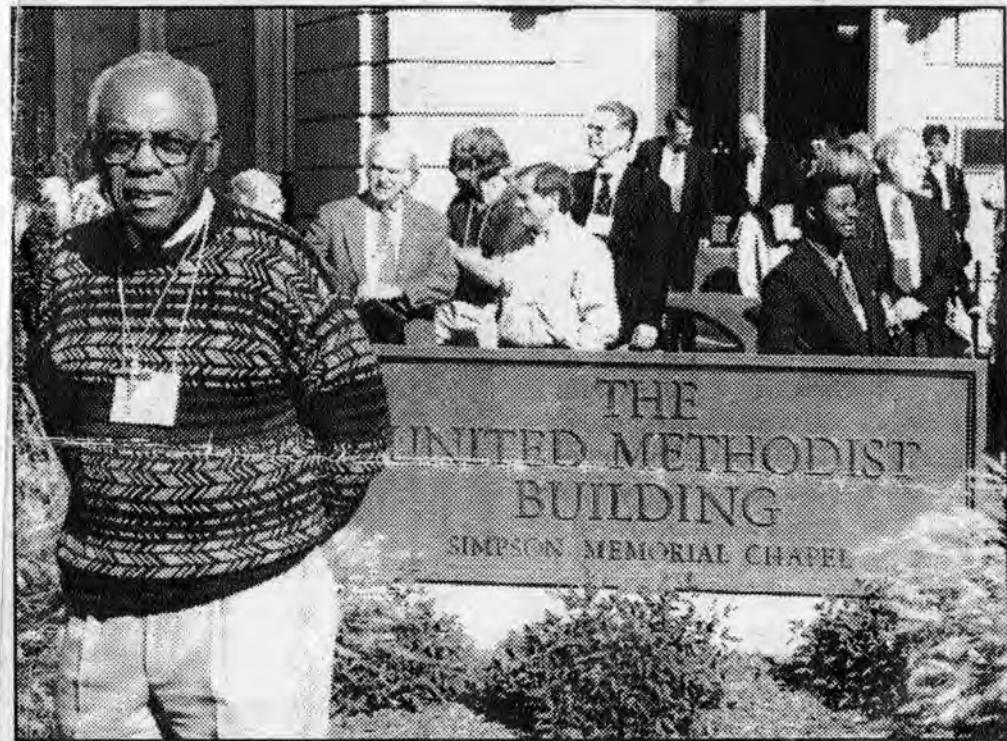
### Offerings could be combined

One proposal to be considered by the May 2-12 General Conference would combine the Peace with Justice Sunday and Human Relations Day special offerings, Hankins said. The result would be a 50 percent cut in funds returned to conferences for peace-with-justice work.

The biennial gathering is important for the Washington-based agency, said Jim Winkler, a church and society executive.

"These are key social-justice leaders in the church," he said. "It's exciting to have them here together. This is the second time we have invited them to come to the United Methodist Building.

"Now representatives from the



Pastor Nathaniel A.B. Hankins of St. Peter's By the Sea UMC, Corpus Christi, stands last month outside the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill in Washington. He was attending a biennial gathering for annual conference social-action leaders Nov. 5-7. He is vice chair of the Board of Church and Society.

West Angola, Mozambique, Estonia, Switzerland-France and Visayas Philippines annual conferences have joined us. The connectional system can only be strengthened by this event."

## Russian court ruling should help