

## Gail Burger, Woman of the Year 1994



Gail Burger is the Executive Director of Dutchess Interfaith Council. Her career is an outgrowth of her genuine concern for individuals and the community. Dutchess Interfaith Council consists of 95 congregations throughout the county. As director, Gail oversees a volunteer board of 25 members who coordinate a variety of community projects including the annual Crop Walk Against Hunger, the Winter Youth Gathering, Interfaith worship services and many other activities that celebrate diversity and unity. Gail's leadership abilities and sensitivity help facilitate the interaction of individuals who normally would not be working together to meet the needs of the community.

A Poughkeepsie native, Gail graduated from Vassar College in 1960. After teaching for four years, Gail spent several years at home raising a family. She and her husband, Emerson, have two children, Claire and Glen.

In 1978 Gail began a new career as Christian Education Director at the First Presbyterian Church in Poughkeepsie. It was during this time she resolved to pursue the goal of becoming an ordained minister. For five years, Gail commuted to Union Theological Seminary in New York City, often leaving home at 5:30 a.m. for an 8 a.m. class. In 1988 she received her degree, Masters of Divinity, and was ordained in the Hughsonville Presbyterian Church where she served as pastor for four years before assuming her current position.