

2007 DISTINGUISHED PEACE LEADERSHIP AWARD
PETER, PAUL & MARY

By David Krieger

Tonight we shine a light on Peace Leadership. Our goal is to honor courageous peace leaders, and to inspire and empower a new generation of peace leaders.

To the young people with us tonight, you are coming of age in a dangerous time, when ignorance, apathy, self-interest and denial are rampant. As a result, you are also entering adulthood in a time of needless, criminal and continuing war. We hope that you will be the leaders you've been waiting for – creative, courageous and committed in securing the future for your generation and those to follow.

I want to congratulate those of you from the University of California for your struggle to end the UC's involvement in creating weapons of mass destruction. I wish you much success. Your actions can provide leadership to the nation and the world.

There can be no peace without justice. Nor can there be peace if we remain silent in the face of injustice or aggression. "There comes a time," Martin Luther King, Jr. intoned, "when silence is betrayal."

This evening we are celebrating Voices for Peace – specifically, three extraordinary Voices for Peace – Peter, Paul and Mary.

Peace requires us to use our voices, individually and collectively. Rarely have there been voices as pure, persistent and harmonious in the quest for peace as those of Peter, Paul and Mary.

Their voices have been raised for more than four decades for civil rights, for protest during the Vietnam War, for the people of El Salvador, for the hungry and homeless, for an end to apartheid, and against the nuclear weapons threat to all humanity.

They believe in “music of conscience,” inspiring others to use their voices for peace and human decency.

Peter Yarrow says, “When people feel empowered to come together and raise their voices [that] will mean raising their voices in song as well.” And Peter, Paul and Mary have used song as a medium for social change.

Paul (Noel) Stookey says, “I’m just hopeful that I can be an encouragement; a challenge to other folks to reach for peace on earth by starting within their own hearts.” And Peter, Paul and Mary have countless times touched our hearts.

Mary Travers says, “All of us are subject to being passive to the social ills around us. It’s a struggle not to become, by staying silent, an accomplice.” And Peter, Paul and Mary have never sat on the sidelines, but always traveled the road of struggle for a better tomorrow.

Peter, Paul and Mary have used their voices and their talent as musicians to empower, encourage, challenge, struggle and break the silence. They have used their voices to stand for peace.

They are not only extremely talented musicians; they are extraordinary people. We honor them tonight for their dedication, courage and persistence in the cause of peace. On behalf of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, I am pleased to present Peter, Paul and Mary with the Foundation’s 2007 Distinguished Peace Leadership Award.