

8-12-2013

Heavy Hitters

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls

Recommended Citation

"Heavy Hitters" (2013). *News Releases*. 394.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/394

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marketing and Communications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlange1@udayton.edu.

University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



Heavy Hitters

08.12.2013 | Culture and Society, International, Faculty, Research

Current and former representatives from the United Nations, Amnesty International USA, Human Rights Watch, WITNESS, Doctors Without Borders and World Peace Foundation are among the leading human rights advocates who will converge for a conference at the University of Dayton Oct. 3-5 to take a long, critical look at the future of human rights.

"Many are familiar with humanitarian aid workers distributing food, medicine and other items, but they are not familiar with those working behind the scenes advocating and lending a voice to those less fortunate," said Mark Ensalcado, University of Dayton director of human rights research. "We want to explore with some of the top human rights advocates in the world how to use education, research and dialogue to propel the human rights community to move human rights advocacy into action."

Speakers include Juan Mendez, U.N. special rapporteur on torture, and Alex de Waal, executive director of the World Peace Foundation, on Oct. 4 and 5, respectively. Mendez's talk, which begins at 7:30 p.m. at the 1700 S. Patterson building, is free and open to the public.

There will be additional U.N. expertise at the conference from Tony Hall, three-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee and former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Agencies for Food and Agriculture; and Anna Jeffreys, a reporter for the official news outlet for the U.N. Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. They will be panel participants on Saturday, Oct. 5, along with:

- Ellen Dorsey, executive director of the Wallace Global Fund
- Jo Becker, Human Rights Watch children's rights advocacy director
- Bill O'Keefe, Catholic Relief Services, vice president, government relations and advocacy
- Ignacio Saiz, Center for Economic and Social Rights executive director
- Louis Bickford, Ford Foundation program officer
- Larry Cox, former executive director of Amnesty International USA
- Alison Brysk, Mellichamp professor of global governance, University of California, Santa Barbara
- Jason Cone, Doctors Without Borders – USA communications director
- Sam Gregory, WITNESS program director
- Leora Kahn, film documentarian, executive director of Proof – Media for Social Justice.
- Christen Dobson, International Human Rights Funders Group program manager for policy and research

Panel topics will include: the future of human rights advocacy, role of media and communications technology in advocacy, integrating human rights and development in practice, and human rights philanthropy.

The University of Dayton is a pioneer in the education of human rights advocates. The University started the country's first undergraduate human rights program in 1998 and began offering one of the nation's first bachelor's degrees in human rights studies in 2008.

In addition to bringing together the world's leading human rights advocates to discuss best practices, the conference will be an opportunity for faculty and students to showcase research. So far, the conference attracted more than 100 presentation submissions from 15 countries.

Some of the presentations will be made by University of Dayton Peter McGrath Human Rights Research Fellows. The fellowship program started last year with a gift from alumnus McGrath for six faculty members and their student research assistants to conduct and publish research in human rights and social justice that promotes human dignity and alleviates suffering.

"This conference is an exciting opportunity to look at the practical lessons gleaned from the human rights movement and how both scholars and advocates can be more effective in advancing human rights," Becker said.

"The Social Practice of Human Rights" kicks off Thursday, Oct. 3, with a concert by the Dayton Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra performing works inspired by challenges to human rights. Research presentations will take place Friday, Oct. 4.

The cost of the conference is \$200 and includes meals. For more information and to register, visit the related link. Updates also will be posted to Twitter — @udhumanrights — and the "University of Dayton Human Rights" Facebook page.

The conference is the first of a doubleheader of banner events in the fall for the University of Dayton human rights program. Emmy Award-winning musician, author and philanthropist Peter Buffett will perform "Life Is What You Make It: A Concert & Conversation with Peter Buffett" to benefit the University of Dayton human rights studies program at 7:15 p.m., Nov. 12, at the Victoria Theatre.

The McGrath gift plus the conference and Buffett concert are part of the University's commitment and process to establish a human rights center.

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of media relations, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu.