

A close-up of a human eye, looking directly at the viewer. The iris is a deep blue color. In the center of the eye, there is a reflection of a large, ornate building at night, illuminated with warm yellow lights. The building has a prominent dome and arched windows. The reflection is slightly blurred, giving it a dreamlike quality. The eyelashes are visible at the top and bottom of the eye.


Joan B. Kroc's DREAM

by Alice Hayes, former USD President

Like many good things that happened at the University of San Diego in the 1990s, my friendship with Joan Kroc began during the presidency of Dr. Author Hughes. When I became president in 1995, he offered to help me meet friends of the university, among them Joan Kroc. She had been a trustee, had received an honorary degree, and her granddaughter was a USD student. Joan attended events and was a faithful donor, although she had never made a major gift.

In March 1996, Dr. Hughes set up a luncheon that marked the beginning of a valued friendship. For all her elegance and wealth, Joan lacked pretension. I often thought that she discussed world events like a friendly next-door neighbor chatting over the fence. We had many conversations about world events and leaders and how we could help bring peace to our troubled world. I often got late-night phone calls from Joan to discuss items of interest or concern.

In 1996, USD was selected to host the presidential debate. This was a great opportunity for our students to observe and participate in a national event. I had hoped Mrs. Kroc would be interested and asked her for financial support. She declined this request but was willing to discuss other projects. I had a long list of needy initiatives in mind, such as a challenge grant to provide interest-free student loans. Joan asked how much was needed to meet the challenge. We had raised \$4 million and were eligible to raise \$3 million more. Although she would not donate \$250,000 for the debate, she readily promised \$3 million to help our students!



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We encouraged the students who received the interest-free loans to write notes to Mrs. Kroc. We then bundled them into an album and presented it to her. As she and I reviewed the album together, we observed the students were very diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, etc. That led to a conversation on how a peace studies program could attract more international students; our admissions team was already trying to increase diversity. Joan and I agreed that John Cardinal Newman was right when he observed, “When a multitude of young people, keen, open-hearted, sympathetic, and observant, come together, they are sure to learn, one from another, even if there is no one to teach them. The conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views.” Students needed to learn how to build community and to benefit from and contribute to their relationships with classmates, teachers, future employers and colleagues who were culturally different from them. Joan replied, “That’s what the world needs! Let’s work on that!” And that was the beginning of the Institute for Peace and Justice and then the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at USD.

By the time of our discussion on peace studies, Joan had already sponsored the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, and she urged me to visit it and meet with Father Hesburgh, the president. Fr. Hesburgh knew our university well and recognized it would provide a good learning environment for peace studies. As our planning progressed, Joan discussed the possibility of

having a Kroc Institute on the West Coast (USD), one in the Midwest (Notre Dame) and eventually one on the East Coast.

As we moved forward with the project, it became clear that peace studies could not be limited to one of our existing schools. All of the USD schools had a potential role in developing a multidisciplinary program. The academic component would be modest at first, but we recognized the potential of having several undergraduate and graduate degrees. When Joan and the faculty met to talk about this, she was delighted with the enthusiasm and impressed by the level of the ideas.

Another thing we did was to examine existing international peace programs at other universities, considering their different approaches. For example, Notre Dame emphasized the need to build a more secure world. Fr. Hesburgh provided a model of international initiatives to control and reduce nuclear weapons. Another approach centered on building better understanding between peoples to result in peaceful relationships. Joan definitely favored that approach, working on building “cultural competence” and relationships. It was a good fit with our institution’s Catholic identity and Joan’s Christian orientation. She was committed to nonviolent methods of resolving conflicts and noted with interest the approach modeled by Mahatma Gandhi and Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. She suggested naming the institute after Gandhi but accepted our wish to recognize her role by naming the institute after her. The first director

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of the Institute for Peace and Justice was Dr. Joyce Neu, who came from the Carter Center where she had been an advisor to former President Jimmy Carter. Dr. Neu had practical experience in leading international peace initiatives.

Joan seriously expected that we at USD would change the world with our vision for peace and justice programs. That was our goal, but it was her conviction. In later years, when we were receiving requests from other countries, the United Nations and the U.S. Department of State to assist them with their projects, I realized that her expectations were quite reasonable. Early on, we were able to attract students from all over the globe.

Over the next few years, we worked with faculty, architects, students and many advisors to fulfill our mission and the vision Joan had for peace and justice at the university. She followed the discussions, calling to review the results with me. In addition to her gift of



The groundbreaking ceremony for the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice was held Oct. 6, 1999, featuring keynote speaker The Honorable Richard Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education.

\$25 million to support the building, she made subsequent gifts to support lectures, events and international initiatives, as well as an estate gift of \$50 million to endow the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, the first stand-alone school of peace in the country.

I know Joan would join me in remembering the words of the Roman orator Cicero, which she had had carved on a retirement gift to me. "All the world is one city in which the community of God and man exist."

Joan Kroc's commitment to building a school for studying and working toward peace and justice is still bearing fruit today. How pleased she would be!



ALICE HAYES, PHD

served as USD president from June 1995 until June 2003. Dr. Hayes guided USD toward greater academic excellence, including improving admission standards, getting recognized with chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, Mortar Board and the Order of the Coif, and leading the creation of the university's first doctoral program. During her tenure, the university built the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, the Donald P. Shiley Center for Science and Technology and the Jenny Craig Pavilion.