

NINETEENTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ADVOCATE FOR PEACE AWARD

2019 INTERNATIONAL ADVOCATE FOR PEACE AWARD

*Sir James Paul McCartney
The International Advocate for Peace Award Recipient*

On May 28, 2019, the Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution presented the Nineteenth Annual International Advocate for Peace Award to Sir James Paul McCartney at Cardozo Law School's forty-first Commencement Ceremony. What follows is a transcription of the award ceremony, including Sir McCartney's acceptance speech.

DEAN MELANIE LESLIE: It is now my honor to introduce Nicholas Gliagias, Editor-in-Chief of the Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution, and Professor Lela Love, the Director of the Kukin Program for Conflict Resolution, to present the International Advocate for Peace Award. [Applause].

NICHOLAS GLIAGIAS: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Nicholas Gliagias and I am the Editor-in-Chief of the *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

Every year, the International Advocate for Peace Award is given by Cardozo Law students to an internationally recognized person who has significantly advanced the cause of peace through both conventional and non-conventional means. Past recipients have included world leaders who advanced peace agendas internationally, including President Bill Clinton, President Jimmy Carter, and Senator George Mitchell. Recipients have also included music artists, journalists, and writers for their powerful use of the arts in the cause of peace and reconciliation, including filmmaker Abigail Disney and folksingers Peter, Paul and Mary. Other award recipients have been involved in efforts to restore peace in war-torn communities, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa and General and Mediator Amira Dotan in the Middle East. This year, we are honored to give the Award to Sir James Paul McCartney. [Applause].

Sir McCartney, your lifetime of work through music has been a healing force worldwide for over five decades. Your songs celebrate love and understanding, empathy and connection—the foundations of peace. Throughout your career, you have continued to inspire all with messages of peace that have imbued generations with more sensitivity, more tolerance, and more recognition that love and understanding are at the heart of the human struggle. In addition, you have supported peace efforts through a wide array of benefit concerts and generous donations to humanitarian causes that have helped people without means all over the world.

Throughout history, it has often been artists who lead the way towards a more peaceful world by creating visions of positivity. And no songwriter or singer has surpassed you in bringing together people from every country in celebration of life—transcending the boundaries of language, culture, religion, and race through the universal power of music.

Thank you for accepting this award and thank you for making our graduation that much more special. [Applause].

SIR PAUL MCCARTNEY: Thank you. Probably easier to play to 40,000 people in a stadium. [Laughter]. Thank you for this huge honor. I am very happy to receive the International Advocate for Peace Award from such a cool school. [Laughter].

When I was growing up in Liverpool in the years after World War II, I asked my dad, “Do people want peace?” He, who had been a fireman during the bombings endured by Liverpool, said “Yes, people want peace. It’s the politicians who mess it up.” And in my travels around the world, with the Beatles, Wings, and my new group, I’ve always found that to be the case. People’s greatest desire is to raise their families in peace.

I’m especially proud to receive this award from Cardozo, which for many years has been known for its work on behalf of peace and justice, helping people who have been wrongfully convicted and assisting immigrants seeking asylum from violence and poverty.

When we started writing songs and making music, we were just kids out to make a living. But as time went on, I realized that people’s lives were being affected by what we were saying. People often come up to me and say, “Your music changed my life”—even people like Bruce Springsteen, David Letterman, and Jerry Seinfeld. [Laughter]. My reply is it was my pleasure. I enjoy what I do, and to think it has a positive effect is a massive bonus. “All

My Loving,” “I Want to Hold your Hand,” “Hey Jude,” “Give Peace a Chance,” all come from the same place—a love for humanity, and the warm relationships we all crave.

I am especially proud to be here with my wife Nancy when my handsome and lovely stepson, Arlen Blakeman, is graduating. [Applause]. His family and I are all so proud of the hard work he has put in over the past years. And by the way, if you have any sports-related questions that need answering, ask him. He’s a virtual encyclopedia of knowledge. We call him the “Arlo-pedia.” [Laughter].

So I would like to thank Dean Melanie Leslie and Nick Gliagias—I’ve been practicing that name [Laughter]—for this great honor, and end by remembering that when my mate, John Lennon, wanted to become an American citizen, he had an immigration fight on his hands with President Nixon. It was a Cardozo professor that won that fight for him—Leon Wildes. [Applause].

Congratulations to the students of the 2019 graduating class. You did it! [Applause].

