

FFWPU USA: Unificationists Salute Soccer Great Pelé

Naokimi Ushiroda

January 9, 2023



Photos courtesy of UPF

"Pelé is considered to be one of the greatest soccer players in history," read an official statement of condolence released Jan. 1 by the Universal Peace Federation, a nonprofit founded by True Parents, who were avid soccer fans. "We are reminded at this time of the passion and importance Rev. Moon and his wife Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon placed on the role of sports as an instrument for world peace."

Unificationists joined fans around the world in offering condolences as they honored the late Brazilian soccer legend Pelé, who passed away Dec. 29, 2022, at the age of 82. Fans paid their final respects during a wake that was held inside Vila Belmiro stadium in São Paulo, Brazil, on Jan. 2.

Regarded as "the greatest" by FIFA, Pelé won a record three World Cups among many other achievements during his celebrated career. At the club level, he set a top record scoring 643 goals in 659 games. "Over the 1960s and 1970s, as a player with legendary Brazilian club Santos, the New York Cosmos in the US, and the Brazilian national team, Pelé delighted fans all over the world with his stylish play. He was known as the king of the 'beautiful game,' a phrase he coined," continued the UPF statement, which was quickly picked up by several news outlets worldwide including a New York [TV station](#) and Nigerian [newspaper](#).

"True Father always had a vision of promoting world peace by connecting people of different religions, nationalities, and races. With this idea, after the 2002 World Cup in South Korea and Japan, he launched the Peace Cup competition in 2003, with Pelé's support. They had much in common: particularly a love for peace and soccer," the statement read.

Pelé and True Father met on several occasions, and Pelé sent condolences to Rev. Moon's family when he passed away in 2012. In his autobiography, True Father who founded professional soccer teams in Korea

and Brazil, wrote about his meeting with Pelé and how the Brazilian star was instrumental in establishing the Peace Cup. The biennial event went on to attract world-renowned clubs such as Real Madrid, Juventus, Porto, and Tottenham.



True Father went on to describe soccer as "a microcosm of life" in his autobiography, as he recalled his great enthusiasm for sports - especially soccer - and the inspiration he drew from the game's critical teamwork. "I have enjoyed sports since I was young," he wrote. "Soccer, however, is the one sport that I continue to enjoy into my old age ... After the [1988 Seoul] Olympics, I carried on the energy of the Games by founding the Ilhwa Chunma professional soccer team."

"When the World Cup was held in Seoul," he continued, "I had three television sets set up side by side so that I could watch all the games ... Soccer is a sport where competition takes place and someone wins or loses, but it also has the potential for significantly influencing countries and increasing their cooperation toward peace."

Pelé touched the lives of generations who watched his skilled moves across the field with sheer fascination that gave rise to the hopes and dreams of countless people around the world. "[We] believe Pelé's achievements and his efforts to use soccer as a means for world peace will be remembered for a long time to come," concluded the UPF statement.

You can read the full statement honoring Pelé [here](#).

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By Chibuike Chukwu — On Jan 2, 2023

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The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) joins the world in offering condolences to the family of a Brazilian soccer player, Pele, winner of a record three World Cups, who died on December 29, 2022, at the age of 82.

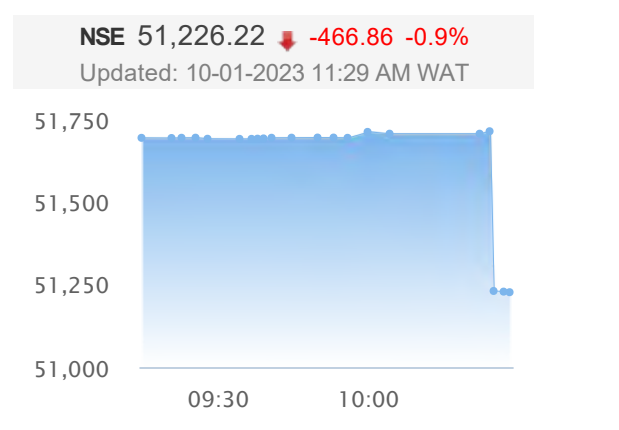
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Pele and Rev. Moon had much in common: a love for peace and soccer. They met on several occasions, and Pele sent condolences to Rev. Moon's family when the religious leader died in 2012.

In his autobiography, Rev. Moon, who in his lifetime founded professional soccer teams in Korea and Brazil, wrote about his meeting with Pele and how the Brazilian star was instrumental in establishing the Peace Cup.

The biennial event went on to attract world-renowned clubs such as Real Madrid, Juventus, Porto, and Tottenham.

"We are reminded at this time," said Dr Thomas Walsh, Chairman of the UPF, "of the passion and importance, Rev. Moon, and his wife Dr Hak Ja Han Moon, placed on the role of sports as an instrument for world peace."



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"Mrs Moon, the co-founder of UPF, often praised Pele's achievements, especially his work in establishing the inaugural Peace Cup in 2003 in South Korea, which brought joy to soccer fans around the world.

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Brazil Legend Pele n Pele UPF



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Chibuikwu Chukwu

Chibuikwu Chukwu is a Senior Correspondent with Independent Newspapers Limited, a member of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN). He has reported sports, especially football, for more than eight years and presently writes on Nigeria football league, the national football teams as well as other sports. His professional career has taking him through a couple of media organizations. He is a graduate of the University of Calabar.

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**GlobeNewswire**

UPF Salutes Soccer Great Pele

Late World Cup Winner Joined in Football Peace Cup

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Washington, DC, Jan. 02, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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“Mrs. Moon, co-founder of UPF, often praised Pele’s achievements, especially his work in establishing the inaugural Peace Cup in 2003 in South Korea, which brought joy to soccer fans around the world. Along with Mrs. Moon, the UPF family admires Pele’s achievements and believes his efforts to use soccer as a means for world peace will be remembered for a long time to come,” said Dr. Walsh.

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Attachment

- [Rev. and Mrs. Moon and Pele](#)

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IN MEMORIAM: PELÉ

Thursday, December 29, 2022



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