

Thomas G. Walsh  
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HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership held its 4th Annual Research Day on Thursday, November 20, bringing together students, faculty, alumni, and guests for an inspiring evening of scholarship and dialogue. The program featured keynote speaker Dr. James Rodgers Fleming, HJI’s most widely published alumnus and a world-renowned historian of science and public policy scholar. Dr. Fleming shared key insights from his decades of research on climate change, offering a thoughtful look at its historical development and policy implications.

Attendees also explored a wide range of research projects presented by HJI students and alumni, covering topics such as peacebuilding, theology, moral philosophy, human rights, and global cooperation. The event highlighted both the academic depth and real-world relevance of the HJI community’s work. HJI appreciates all the submissions and encourages all to continue to research and write about topics that highlight current issues and present a possible solution to realize it. [View All Research Posters here.](#)

[Watch the Recording here!](#)

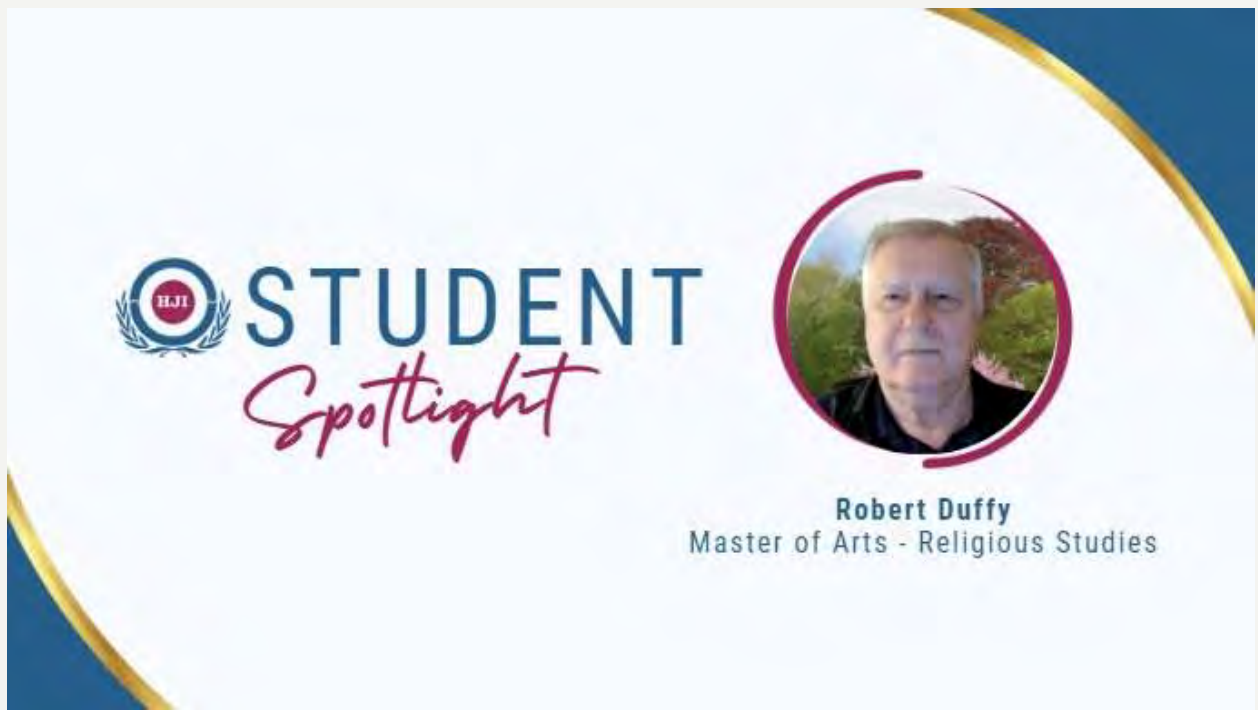


On March 18, 2010, at a special event held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York entitled “Honoring a Legacy of Peace at the United Nations,” Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han, presided over a memorial ceremony recognizing eight historic figures who had passed away between 2007 and 2010. Among those honored was President Kim Dae Jung, a leading architect of Korea’s democracy and a pivotal figure in ending the era of military authoritarianism. [Read more...](#)



On November 15, 2025, the National Day of Peace in Côte d’Ivoire, the Universal Peace Federation–USA, in partnership with Women for Peace in Africa, honored three outstanding leaders of the African diaspora community during a special ceremony held

at the new campus of HJ International in Manhattan. Three dynamic young Africans received the Ambassador for Peace certificate in recognition of their service, leadership, and commitment to promoting peace within their communities. [Read more...](#)



**Robert Duffy | Master of Arts in Religious Studies | Montreal, Canada**

**What inspired you to apply to HJI and your program? What do you most appreciate about being a student at HJI?**

Rev. Moon invited me to attend HJI (UTS at the time) in 1991, but I was unable to at that time due to family concerns. I had given up my university education to be fully active as a UC member in the 1970s, but I always wanted to complete my studies. With my children grown up and established, I sought to fulfill that long-neglected wish in religious studies, a zone of interest I had spent my adult life in. As an HJI student, I have the pleasure of learning from the highest level of academic faculty among both young and older students, formalizing and greatly augmenting what I have learned informally in my religious career.

**If applicable, share about the benefits of your online learning experience**

As an online student, I can take each course at my own pace, in keeping with my commitments to family and church that are ongoing. Even though I am retired, I am far from being inactive.

**Is there any other highlight or aspect of your study at HJI that you would like to share?**

I have been invited to give sermons at a Lutheran Church in my city, and have accepted as a result of my HJI training.

**What do you enjoy in your free time?**

I golf, babysit my grandkids, and go on holidays and outings with my children.

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For more information about HJI, email [admissions@hji.edu](mailto:admissions@hji.edu)

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## Revisiting a Forgotten Alliance: Kim Dae Jung, the Moons, and Korea's Democratic Journey

by Thomas J. Ward | Nov 6, 2025 | [Op-eds Global](#)

Kim was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for promoting democracy and human rights. He had a friendly relationship with Reverend and Mrs. Moon. His legacy should not be betrayed.

by Thomas J. Ward



*President Kim Dae Jung (1924–2009) visiting the Unification Church-affiliated “Segye Ilbo” newspaper on February 1, 1999, in Seoul to celebrate its tenth anniversary, joining Reverend Sun Myung Moon (1920–2012) and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon in the cake-cutting ceremony.*

On March 18, 2010, at a special event held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York entitled “[Honoring a Legacy of Peace at the United Nations](#),” Reverend Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han, presided over a memorial ceremony recognizing eight historic figures who had passed away between 2007 and 2010. Among those honored was President Kim Dae Jung, a leading architect of Korea's democracy and a pivotal figure in ending the era of military authoritarianism.

Kim served as President of the Republic of Korea from 1998 to 2003 and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000 “for his work for democracy and human rights in South Korea and in East Asia in general, and for peace and reconciliation with North Korea in particular.” He passed away on August 18, 2009.

Kim's struggle to establish a democratic tradition in Korea is well known. After seizing power in the wake of President Park Chung Hee's assassination, General Chun Doo Hwan declared martial law and brutally suppressed a civilian uprising in Gwangju beginning on May 18, 1980—an event that claimed hundreds of lives. Kim, a longtime democratic opposition leader and vocal critic of authoritarianism, was accused on false pretenses of inciting the uprising and was sentenced to death by the Chun government. His life was spared only through international pressure, particularly from U.S. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan.

Ironically, years later, when Chun himself was sentenced to death for unbridled human rights violations against dissidents, it was Kim Dae Jung—his former victim—who pleaded with President Kim Young Sam to pardon him in a spirit of national reconciliation. In the years that followed, President Chun grew to appreciate Kim. Three days before Kim Dae Jung's death in August 2009, Chun visited him at Yonsei University's Severance Hospital in Seoul and [shared his fond recollections of the Kim presidency with Kim's wife](#): “During his tenure, I was invited to the Blue House on about ten occasions and was able to stay on top of current affairs. After his overseas trips, President Kim invited former first couples and briefed us on his work. He also treated us to lavish dinners.”

President Kim Dae Jung's capacity to transcend partisan biases for the sake of national unity did not go unnoticed by Dr. Hak Ja Han and Reverend Sun Myung Moon. With his 1982 release from prison and exile to the United States, [Kim was recognized and welcomed by followers of Dr. Han and Reverend Moon in America](#) (p.4 of hyperlink).

Kim Dae Jung was bold enough, as President, to visit the Seoul headquarters of the Unification Church-affiliated “Segye Ilbo” newspaper on February 1, 1999, to celebrate its tenth anniversary. He offered a fifteen-minute congratulatory



speech and joined the Moons in the cake-cutting ceremony. Reverend Joong Hyun Park, who served as the Continental Director for the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification USA in 1999, [described their relationship](#) as “an interesting bit of history going back quite a few years between Father [Reverend Moon] and President Kim.” Some in America’s alternative press claimed that [this connection had been in place since the 1980s](#).



*President Kim welcomed by Reverend and Mrs. Moon upon his arrival at the “Segye Ilbo” headquarters, February 1, 1999.*

Kim Dae Jung not only attended the “Segye Ilbo” anniversary; his government also honored Julia Moon, the Moons’ daughter-in-law, with [Korea’s Order of Cultural Merit in 1999](#) for founding and leading the Universal Ballet Company, Korea’s first world-class national ballet troupe. When Kim Dae Jung passed away in 2009, a member of the Moon family represented his parents and officially conveyed their condolences to the Kim family. This final gesture of respect epitomized their appreciation for him and their shared history of suffering, perseverance, and dedication to Korea’s progress.

The historical moments of dialogue and mutual respect between Kim Dae Jung and the Moons invite reflection on current developments in Korea. An investigation targeting Dr. Hak Ja Han, led by Special Prosecutor Min Joong-ki has raised legitimate concerns about political overreach. Critics argue that [the prosecutor’s aggressive tactics](#), which may have contributed to the suicide of a public servant under interrogation, recall earlier eras of political repression.

Dr. Han reportedly underwent more than twenty-five hours of questioning before refusing further interrogation. The Special Prosecutor’s inquiry focused on alleged ties between Hak Ja Han and the 2024 Yoon Suk Yeol election campaign—accusations which Han has publicly denied. The 82-year old Mother Han has been detained for over a month in a cell with no natural lighting, no bed, no chair, and denied access to her wheelchair. Dehumanizing treatment of political prisoners contrasts sharply with the nuanced history of dialogue and reconciliation between reformers and marginalized organizations that Kim Dae Jung pioneered.

Special Prosecutor Min appears determined to take advantage of this [final chapter of the existing current Korean Prosecution Service](#)—a body long criticized as a tool of partisan politics due its power both to investigate and indict political opponents, and, in this specific case, to eviscerate former President Yoon Suk Yeol, his family, alleged allies, and apparently the [People’s Power Party itself](#).

Today, South Korea faces two enduring challenges: the continuing threat from the North and the unresolved legacy of its own authoritarian past. Few could have imagined that a party once led—and still inspired—by Kim Dae Jung would now employ tactics reminiscent of those he spent a lifetime resisting.

Rather than weaponizing history, Korea must remember it—honestly and fully. Kim Dae Jung understood that democracy is not born in isolation; it is forged in coalition—between the secular and the spiritual, between the incumbent and the loyal opposition, and the magnanimity that Kim Dae Jung demonstrated, to forgive and forget. That legacy is more vital today than ever.

[Religious Liberty, South Korea, Unification Church](#)



**Thomas J. Ward**

**Thomas J. Ward**, a Unificationist for more than fifty years, is Professor of Peace and Development Studies at HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership. He previously served for eighteen years as Dean of the College of Public and International Affairs at the University of Bridgeport. A Fulbright alumnus, his work has been published inter alia by “*East Asia Quarterly*,” “*E-International Relations*,” and “*The Journal of CESNUR*.”



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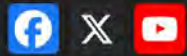
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# National Day of Peace in Côte d'Ivoire, the Universal Peace Federation–USA, in partnership with Women for Peace in Africa

## OUTSTANDING LEADERS OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA COMMUNITY HONORED AT HJI



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Three dynamic young Africans received the **Ambassador for Peace** certificate in recognition of their service, leadership, and commitment to promoting peace within their communities.

**Mr. Bakary “Bouba” Kida**, Manager at American Express and Founder of the **Malian Students and Professionals Association**, was honored for his mentorship to young Malians across the United States. A strong believer in the American dream, he encourages African youth to pursue education, professional excellence, and integrity in all areas of life.

The second honoree, **Mr. Brice Sidnôma Ouédraogo**, serves as a Delegate and Community Organizer within the **Haut Conseil des Burkinabè de New York (HCBE-NY)**. He has played a pivotal role in strengthening relationships between the Burkinabè diaspora and Burkina Faso’s diplomatic institutions. Mr. Ouédraogo currently serves as the official liaison between the community and Burkina Faso’s government representatives.

The third honoree, **Coach Fatou Bakayoko**, is a Certified Personal Trainer, Group Instructor, Nutrition Coach, and Entrepreneur. She has transformed her personal journey of hardship, resilience, and healing into a mission dedicated to empowerment and peace. Fatou has inspired many women in the community to embrace fitness, cultivate confidence, and pursue holistic well-being.

**Mr. Barry**, the National Coordinator of the **AP Initiative Project**, joined **Dr. Drissa Kone** to present the Ambassador for Peace certificates to the distinguished nominees.

Dr. Walsh, President of HJI, congratulated the awardees and encouraged them to remain connected with the HJI community. He also announced that in January, HJI will confer an **honorary doctorate** upon Imboni Radebe, a prominent spiritual leader in South Africa, and extended an invitation to all African communities to participate in this historic event.

The evening concluded with a warm dinner reception and networking among attendees.



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