

Leonard Pitts Jr. 2021 Peace Lecture Delivers America's Possibilities by Sheryl Wilson

On Sunday afternoon April 25th, political columnist and author Leonard Pitts Jr. returned to KIPCOR and Bethel College for another groundbreaking lecture - at least, virtually. During a worldwide pandemic, his words and commentary were well-received by the Bethel Community as he offered the KIPCOR 2021 Spring Peace Lecture via a Zoom webinar.

Pitts first came to Bethel in 2017 to a packed Memorial Hall with over 1,500 in attendance and delivered a peace lecture titled, "America in the Age of Trump." This event marked the 30th anniversary of KIPCOR and was

one of the most talked-about and well-attended peace lectures to date.

Pitts' 2021 peace lecture, provocatively titled, "Is America Possible," was a follow-up to his first peace lecture. Over 400 attendees were present on Zoom webinar or live-streamed on YouTube. He stated, "The first time I spoke for KIPCOR was four years ago when I was asked to offer a few words on the subject of America in the Age of the 45th President. I made an argument that, thanks to gerrymandering making it all but impossible to unseat certain congresspersons, thanks to conservatives undermining the credibil-

ity of news media and news media doing far too little to fight back, and thanks to the Republican Party embracing an agenda of what I call 'anti-



Leonard Pitts Jr. delivers Peace Lecture via Zoom

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When Peace is Not Silent: Expanding our Views on Peacemaking by Sheryl Wilson

KIPCOR Director Sheryl Wilson recently shared her thoughts on what peacemaking looks like in 2021 for Humanities Kansas' March installation of "The Big Idea".



Sheryl Wilson

In recent months because of a variety of events, I have been thinking deeply about what it means to bring peace. Our work at the Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR), a peacebuilding institute, naturally puts us in the category of helping people find peaceful resolutions through conflict resolution work, specifically restorative justice and mediation.

Peace may mean standing up for those who are disenfranchised, under-

served, unnoticed, or simply in need. Or, being peaceful can mean not making a statement and practicing restraint.

Sometimes we must go against the grain to bring about peace. After the recent riots at the U.S. Capitol, reflecting on the day's events and the people who incited the conflict, Senator Mitt Romney said: "the best way we can show respect for the voters who were upset is by telling them the truth."

Telling the truth brings about peace because it destroys the illusion of myths. The folktale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, tells the story of an emperor who was deceived into believing the false narrative of wearing a beautiful new suit, when, in reality, no one wanted to tell him the truth - that he wasn't wearing any clothes. Are we walking on eggshells because we are trying to avoid telling someone the truth?

I feel extremely fortunate to work in the field of restorative justice at KIPCOR, through our Restorative Schools Initiative, (RSI). As part of our RSI Team, we train educators, administrators, and other school staff in restorative practices, which introduces a solid foundation for community-building and provides options for peaceful solutions when conflict arises in K-12 school environments. Being able to have an impact on young people

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Leonard Pitts Jr.*Continued from page 1*

Leonard Pitts Jr.

fact', America had gone, and I quote, 'bat-crap crazy.'

With laser precision, Pitts described the state of the country amid current events including the racial reckoning of 2020, the 2020 US presidential election, and the insurrection at the Capitol earlier this year. He spoke with such grave concern that those viewing the event might have assumed

that Pitts' answer to his big question is, "no, America isn't possible."

Despite all the despair expressed at the beginning of his lecture, Pitts gave some relief to his audience by taking them out of suspense, "Yes," he exclaimed. "America is not easy, but America is possible. America is challenging, but America is possible. America is something we've never achieved, but America is possible."

He went on to discuss the difficult road ahead, but with hope in his words, by offering his solutions for a

"more perfect union": by becoming anti-racist, becoming more inclusive, eradicating the electoral college, and coming to terms with and overcoming white supremacy.

He ended his lecture with a charge that Americans are up to the challenge, ***"But as I say, we are at an existential crossroads now. The country and the world will be shaped by the paths we choose in this moment. So it is time to show some guts. Americans must do this. Because America is worth it."***

The Big Idea*Continued from page 1*

by equipping them with these life skills will hopefully help them to make better choices when they are faced with conflict as adults.

January 2021 marked the 35th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Day as a national holiday. In much of his life, one of the overarching themes of his messages looked at how to bring peace in troubled times. In one of his last speeches, Dr. King asked people not to remember him for his many accomplish-

ments, but, he said, "If you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness"

In the past year and recently, we have heard the voices of unrest. We have heard from protesters following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and other Black Americans. We have also seen rioters, many of whom identify with White su-

premacist groups, desecrate the Capitol in reaction to the outcomes of the 2020 election. We are posed with the question, how do we find peace in the middle of the storm, when there may not be an immediate resolution? Amanda Gorman, America's youngest inaugural poet, suggests in her poem *"The Hill We Climb"* that, "We've learned that quiet isn't always peace, and the norms and notions of what just is isn't always just-ice."

First Cohort of Criminal and Restorative Justice Minors Celebrates *by Sheryl Wilson*

In 2017, under the department of social work at Bethel College, KIPCOR was approved to offer a minor in Criminal and Restorative Justice. In order to receive the minor, students are required to take a course in criminal justice (3 credit hours), a restorative justice course (3 hours), and a restorative justice capstone (1 hour).

Upon successful completion of the minor, students will:

Understand the structure and scope of the U.S. criminal justice system, including major concepts, current trends, and best professional practices pertaining to its operation;

Understand the restorative ap-

proach to justice, including its theoretical, cultural, and spiritual roots as well as its applicability to contexts inside and outside the criminal justice system; and

Possess practical skills for applying restorative techniques in specific situations.

The first cohort of students seeking the minor began in the fall of 2018. Three students graduated in the class of 2021 with the Criminal and Restorative Justice minor. They are Lauryn Dryer, Joshua Jackson, and Cami Mills.

Cami and Josh both grad-

uated with degrees in Social Work. They have been accepted into WSU's Master of Social Work program and will begin their study this summer. Lauryn, who graduated with a degree in psychology, also has plans for graduate school. KIPCOR staff is extremely proud of these students and wish them well with their future plans.



Bethel College President Jonathan Gering with Lauryn Dryer and KIPCOR Director Sheryl Wilson with Joshua Jackson and Cami Mills.

Getting to Know KIPCOR: Meet Eva Lapp, Education and Training Director



On July 7 KIPCOR welcomes our new Director of Education and Training, Eva Lapp.

In July, Eva Lapp will be stepping into the role of Director of Education & Training at KIPCOR. Prior to joining the KIPCOR team, Eva, a 2015 graduate of Goshen College, also completed a Master of Public Affairs at Indiana University (IU).

She has worked and volunteered in the restorative justice field in a variety of roles over the past few years, including at the Center for Restorative Programs in Alamosa, CO, the Center for Community Justice in Elkhart, IN, Peace Learning Center in Indianapolis, IN, and as an adjunct instructor for the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program at Goshen College in Goshen, IN.

More recently, Eva served as a Teaching Assistant for a graduate-level Negotiation and Alternative Dispute Resolution course at IU Bloomington. Outside of these roles, Eva has also worked as an

archival assistant for Mennonite Church USA and as a floral designer. Through these experiences, she enjoys exploring creativity and storytelling in all aspects of her work.

To help us all get to know Eva better, we asked her a few questions:

What are you currently reading?

Most recently I finished reading Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* and Simon Jimenez's *The Vanished Birds*. I am also making my way slowly through Resmaa

Menakem's *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies*. Menakem's book includes a lot of reflective practices so it's an immersive experience.

Where have you lived?

I was born in the West Bank, Palestine, but primarily grew up in Goshen, IN, with brief stints living in Akron, PA, and Kathmandu, Nepal. During college, I studied abroad in Tanzania and spent summers in British Columbia and at Koinonia Farm in Americus, GA. Following college, I lived in Alamosa, CO; Goshen; and in Bloomington, IN.

What is your favorite place in the world?

My maternal extended family has rented a house on Lake Michigan for the past 18 years.

It's probably not the lake house you're picturing, more in the realm of an old semi-spidery cabin in the woods with access to the lake. But it is perfect. I'm not sure I have ever been as calm, happy, and relaxed as when I am there with my family.

What is your favorite food?

My family collectively thinks that Middle Eastern cuisine is the best food in the world, but my partner and I have grown to love cooking and eating Chinese (particularly Sichuan) dishes. I also love a freshly picked garden tomato as an afternoon snack.

What is your favorite game?

If we're talking yard games, it's croquet in my parents' backyard (mole hills make for more competition). If we're talking card games, it's Rook (10.5). If we're talking easy board games, it's Qwirkle. If we're talking complicated board games, it's Agricola - a farming game with lots of little tiny wooden pieces.

What excites you most about moving to Kansas?

After moving several times in the past few years, I am really looking forward to being somewhere more long term. With family in the area and KIPCOR's connection with the Bethel College community, I am so excited to dive into the work and build relationships within the broader community.

Welcome, Eva! We look forward to getting to know you and to working with you, and we hope that you find the same love for the work of KIPCOR that we all share.

Explosion of KIPCOR Virtual Education & Training Opportunities *by Kirsten Zerger and Sheryl Wilson*

When COVID shut-down orders were issued in Spring 2020, and courts and schools were shut-down for in-person contact, KIPCOR staff initially assumed that its training services would no longer be in much demand. How wrong we were!

In some ways, demands for training actually increased once we figured out how to modify our presentations for a virtual platform. We faced a steep learning curve, but the entire staff dove into this new virtual world, and we were delighted to hear satisfied comments and positive evaluations, along with helpful suggestions for continually refining our virtual work.

Office manager Doug Lengel has become our in-house Zoom engineer, managing the movement and on-screen experience of sometimes hundreds of participants in a given training. And Executive Director Sheryl Wilson found herself in high demand leading virtual circle processes on a national level, as people from around the country looked for ways to engage with each other and the many challenging situations faced over the past year.

Here is a taste of the virtual trainings we have presented and are scheduled to present in the near future, with participants joining from every corner of Kansas, and sometimes beyond.

Parents Forever: divorce impact education class offered virtually twice each month.

H.O.P.E. (Healthy Opportunities for Parenting Effectively), a 10-

week skills-building class for separated or divorced parents who have particularly conflicted co-parenting relationships; offered 3 times a year.

July 30, 2020: Introduction to Restorative Justice, presented to over a hundred interested community members and sponsored by the Douglas County Restorative Justice Project.

August 7, 2020: Walking the Talk: Practicing Restorative Justice and Anti-Racism, KIPCOR Director Sheryl Wilson presented to the University of Minnesota Center for Practice Transformation to a crowd of over 1,000 participants.

August 13-14, 2020: Introduction to Restorative Practices in Schools, Lawrence Public Schools

August 31 – September 3, 2020: Practical Skills for Managing Interpersonal Conflict (Core Mediation) – the first core mediation virtual training approved by the KS Office of Judicial Administration (open to all).

September 21 – October 3, 2020: Domestic Mediation Training, the first domestic mediation virtual training approved by the KS Office of Judicial Administration (open to all).

September 2020- May 2021: monthly Restorative Practices coaching/training for Lawrence Unified School District Student Support Facilitators.

November 10 & 12, 2020: Mentor Mediator Training, the first mentor mediator virtual training ap-

proved by the KS Office of Judicial Administration.

December 4, 2020: KIPCOR Shorts, first virtual presentation of KIPCOR's annual continuing education offering for mediators, social workers, and all state-approved dispute resolution providers.

February 23- 24, 2021: Restorative Practices in Schools, an introduction for middle school parents in the Lawrence Unified School District.

April 5, 7 and 9, 2021: Shocker Circle Keeper Training, Wichita State University

April 8, 2021: Restorative Justice and Anti-Racism: A Community Conversation, KIPCOR Director Sheryl Wilson presented to a group of over 100 participants at University of Texas San Antonio

May 4-7, 2021: Restorative Justice in Schools - Harm Repair Training (open to a variety of school district teachers and administrators who had already received introductory restorative practices training).

June 9, 2021: A Taste of Restorative Practices, presentation to 150 teachers and administrators in the Kansas City Kansas Public School system.

August 6, 9, and 10, 2021: Introduction to Restorative Practices in Schools, Leavenworth and Shawnee Mission Public Schools.

August 11-13, 2021: Introduction to Restorative Practices in Schools, Lawrence Free State and Lawrence High School.

Thanks to those of you who have so generously contributed to KIPCOR in as we near the end of the fiscal year. With your help, and those of the other supporters, ***we are moving toward our goal of \$40,000.00*** by June 30. We received nearly \$10,000 in support of our two Peace Lectures! We know that many of you plan your giving to the college around the fiscal year, and we feel that our goal is well within reach. Thank you!!!

If you would like to make an electronic donation, see page 6 for detailed instructions.

Allison Weaver wins C Henry Smith Peace Oration Contest ~Melanie Zuercher



Bethel College has two winners in the annual C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest, announced on May 27.

Allison Weaver, junior from Hesston, placed first with *"Our Opponents Can't Fight Back: Ending the Environmental War."*

Junior Linda Moyo, also from

nize possibly the greatest environmental threat, loss of habitat, and take steps to curb it.

She suggests starting with a small step, within an individual's own "sphere of influence." Even a modest action, such as picking up garbage while on a walk, will overlap with others' spheres and create bigger change.

People can also "make peace with their pocketbooks" by researching the companies they tend to buy from, looking for ones with solid environmental ethics, such as those that carry the Green Seal (www.greenseal.org).

Finally, she advocates pushing environmental protection policies by making contact with lawmakers to express support for bills and legislation.

"We are not meant to duke it out in a ruthless battle to extinction," Weaver concluded, "[but] we are called as peacemakers to extend the hand of peace to every fellow organism."

Going from the global to the personal, Moyo looked at a fact of human life: nothing is without conflict, which can and often does produce a feeling of chaos.

Because Christians have GPS – God's Positioning System – and because all humans have choice, she said, Christians can make peace by choosing to creatively engage with the conflict and the chaos, and thereby produce something new and positive.

The Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR)

organizes the oration contest at Bethel each year, which is sponsored in the United States and Canada by Mennonite Central Committee.

The C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest is open to all students at Mennonite and Brethren in Christ colleges in Canada and the United States. To be considered for the contest, speeches must apply a peace theme to a contemporary concern.

Directors of the C. Henry Smith Trust established the contest in 1974 in honor of the late Mennonite historian and professor at Goshen (Indiana) College and Bluffton (Ohio) College, now Bluffton University.

Participating colleges host individual campus contests, usually during the spring semester of the academic year, and judges selected by MCC choose the top three speeches from among the winners of the campus contests.



Allison accepts the first place prize from KIPCOR Director Sheryl Wilson

Hesston, was second with *"There is Peace in the Midst of Chaos."*

There is a global war in progress, Weaver said, waged by every citizen, "from the tiniest baby to the most powerful politician, [who] are doing [their] best to kill the Earth, and ... winning."

But there is hope of making peace, she continued, if we recog-



Linda accepts the second place prize from KIPCOR Director Sheryl Wilson

Donating to KIPCOR online is REALLY easy, and REALLY SECURE.

STEP 1: Go to the KIPCOR website at www.kipcor.org.

STEP 2: Click on "**Get Involved**" in the ribbon at the top, and then on "**Donate/Volunteer**"

STEP 3: Read the information on the Donate page; pay particular attention to "**Donation Instructions**"

STEP 4: Click on the "**Donate Online Today!**" button.

STEP 5: Click on the amount of your donation. Next is the "**Designation**" selection. The default is "Bethel College Fund", and there is a downward facing arrow at the right inside that box. Click on that arrow and select "**KIPCOR**". Click on "**Continue**" to fill out the rest of the required information. **That's all there is to it!**

STEP 6: (Optional) If it's not too much trouble, or if you have difficulties filling out the form, let Doug (dlengel@bethelks.edu or 316-284-5217) or Sheryl (swilson@bethelks.edu) in the KIPCOR office know that you've made an online donation so we can watch for the receipt from the development office, and give you a proper THANK YOU!!!

Thanks for your continued support!

KIPCOR Calendar

More information & registration is
available at www.kipcor.org/Calendar/

August 6, 2021

Restorative Justice Training, Leavenworth schools

9 am - 4 pm

Via Zoom

August 9-10, 2021

Restorative Justice Training, Leavenworth schools

8 am - noon

Via Zoom

August 9-10, 2021

Restorative Justice Training Shawnee Mission

1 pm—5 pm

Via Zoom.

August 11-13, 2021

Restorative Justice Training Lawrence schools

8 am - 5 pm

Via Zoom.

September 12, 2021

KIPCOR Film Series Film to be determined

2:00 pm

Krehbiel Auditorium @ Luyken Fine Arts Center.
North Newton, KS 67117

September 20, 2021 (and additional meeting dates)

Healthy Opportunities for Parenting Effectively

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Kaufman House 2515 College Ave. North Newton

November 14, 2021

KIPCOR Film Series Film to be determined

2:00 pm

Krehbiel Auditorium @ Luyken Fine Arts Center.
North Newton, KS 67117

December 3, 2021

CME/CEU Shorts

8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Krehbiel Auditorium @ Luyken Fine Arts Center.
North Newton, KS 67117

February 20, 2022

KIPCOR Film Series Film to be determined

2:00 pm

Krehbiel Auditorium @ Luyken Fine Arts Center.
North Newton, KS 67117

March 7, 2022 (and additional meeting dates)

Healthy Opportunities for Parenting Effectively

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Kaufman House 2515 College Ave. North Newton

April 24, 2022

KIPCOR Film Series Film to be determined

2:00 pm

Krehbiel Auditorium @ Luyken Fine Arts Center.
North Newton, KS 67117

Additionally, KIPCOR and the Community Mediation Center offer two classes for divorcing parents each month. We offer the Divorce Impact Education class the second Thursday of the month and on the fourth Tuesday of the month 5:00 PM, live online via Zoom

Contact the Community Mediation Center at (316) 284-5829 or CMC@bethelks.edu for more information on these classes.

KIPCOR's 2021 - 2022 Film Series

The theater doors are about to re-open!



The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to get creative and re-imagine the way we provide services and administer programs. Our Film Series was no exception. After canceling the film scheduled for April 2020, KIPCOR experimented with various online formats in September and November 2020, and again in February 2021.

While offering our films and talkback sessions in a virtual format had its benefits (e.g. people can "attend" from anywhere on the planet!), it could not replace the communal experience of watching a film together in the same space, followed by a post-film discussion with a subject expert(s).

So as we emerge from the pandemic, KIPCOR is ready to welcome you back to claim your favorite film-viewing seat in Bethel College's Krehbiel Auditorium! Here are the dates to reserve on your calendar:

Sunday, September 12, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 14, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 20, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 24, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

We have not yet selected specific films or identified our post-film discussion leaders, so if you have suggestions, please contact Dan Wassink at (316) 284-5829 or dwassink@bethelks.edu.

KIPCOR and IOLTA: A Perfect Pairing Dan Wassink

KIPCOR's Community Mediation Center (CMC) has enjoyed a long relationship with local courts in educating divorcing/separating parents, and helping them resolve their custody conflicts in the best interests of their children. For the last six years, CMC has provided those services through its unique *Dispute Resolution Triage Program*.

However, it has not been easy. Triage Program administrative costs far exceed income, and KIPCOR is always looking for new sources of funding to keep the Program afloat.

That is why we are so grateful to the Kansas Bar Foundation for its ongoing financial contribution to support the Triage Program. For the third straight year, the Foundation has earmarked \$2,500 for that purpose, with a substantial portion of funds going to support low-income parents who struggle to pay Program fees.

The grant funds come from the Foundation's Interest on Lawyers Trust Account (IOLTA) program, established in 1984 as a mechanism to fund programs that improve the provision of legal services to residents of Kansas and improve the administration of justice, particularly for low-income individuals.

THANK YOU to the Kansas Bar Foundation for continuing to recognize and support the Triage Program and the many families it serves!



Volunteers & Continuing Support Needed!

KIPCOR works in part because of generous assistance from volunteers, many of whom have now retired from their volunteering days (thanks to every one of you!). ***So we are calling all volunteers! The gift of your time or a referral to others who might help is most welcome!***



FOOD: KIPCOR is known for the quality of food provided during our trainings & events. ***Do you enjoy cooking and baking?*** Volunteer to help and we'll contact you to see if it would be convenient for you to provide baked goods, or perhaps a full meal (cooking duties can be shared with another volunteer).



MAILINGS: We have a large mailing list and our mass mailings (newsletters, for instance) need ***many hands to help*** with folding, sealing, and labeling. Volunteer and we will add your name to the contact list so you will know when we need help.



ROLE-PLAYERS: KIPCOR trains student mediators throughout the year, and part of that training can include rigorous role-play practice... which requires help from ***volunteer thespians***. Do you long for the stage every now and then? Volunteer and play the part of a parent fighting for more parenting time, a landlord or tenant, a consumer or business owner, or an unhappy neighbor.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT: We are associated with Bethel College, but ***almost entirely self-funded***. Since money does NOT grow on trees, we need to find it somewhere else. Without the generous support of friends and corporate/foundation sponsors, our work simply cannot continue.

If you can help us in our mission of peacemaking, please contact our Office Manager, Doug Lengel, at: 316-284-5217 or dlengel@bethelks.edu. He will be happy to explain the volunteer process to you.

www.kipcor.org



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